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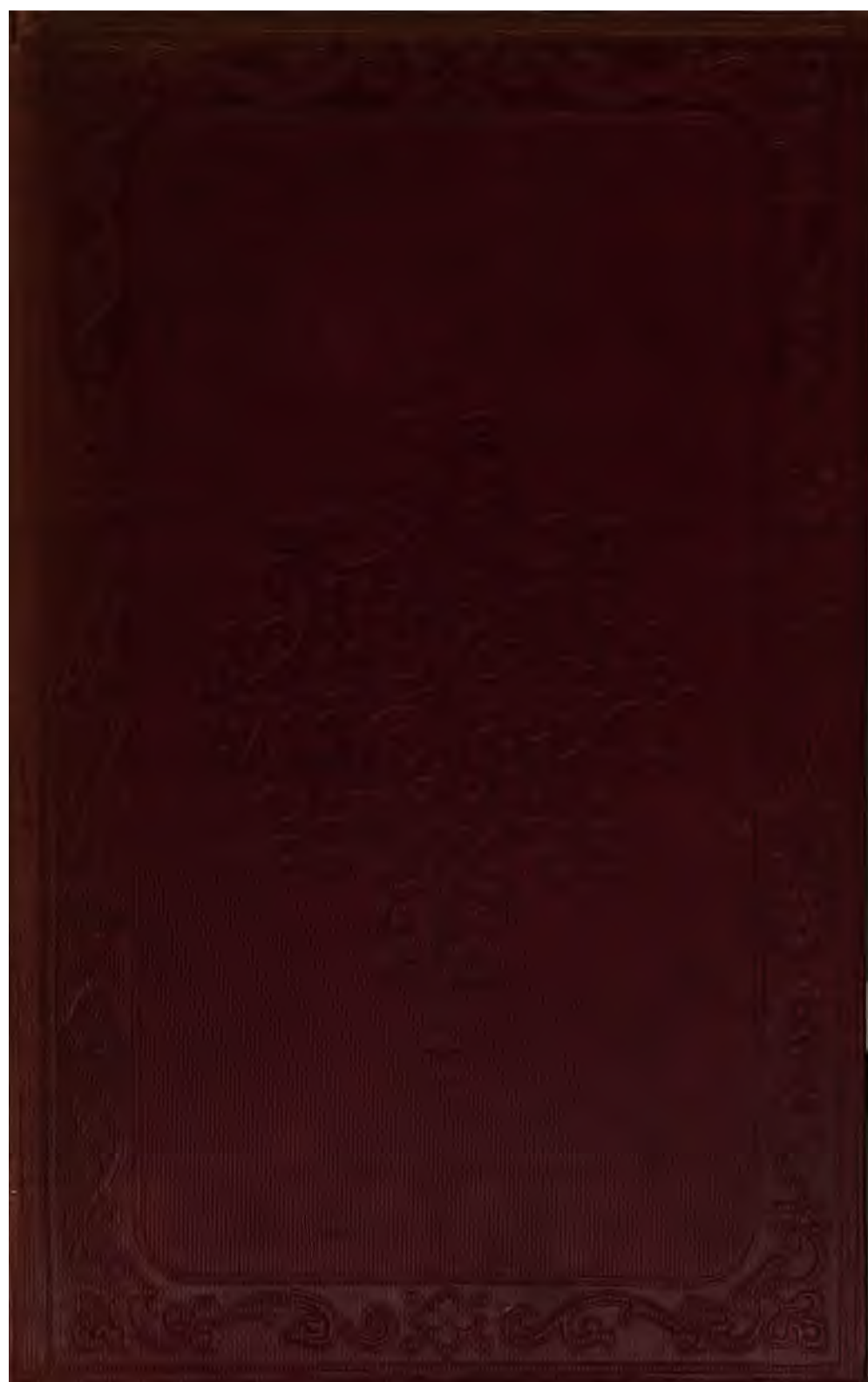
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THE DIARY
OF
MARTHA BETHUNE BALIOL.

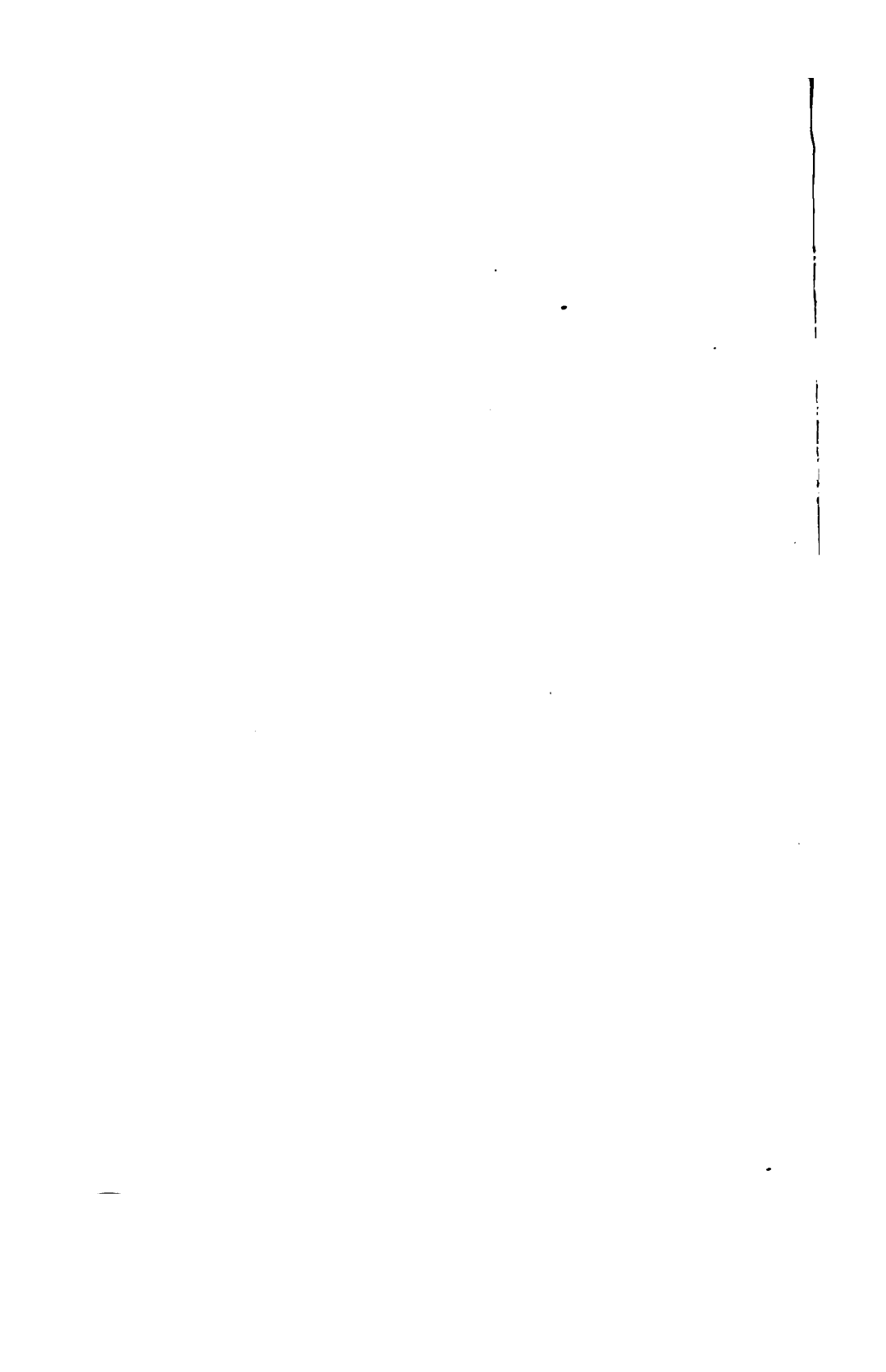


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THE DIARY

OF

MARTHA BETHUNE BALIOL.



THE DIARY

OF

MARTHA BETHUNE BALIOL,

FROM 1753 TO 1754.

My love he stood for his true King,
Till standing it could do nae mair;
The day is lost, and sae are we;
Nae wonder mony a heart is sair.
ANON.

LONDON:
CHAPMAN AND HALL, 193, PICCADILLY.
1853.

210. c. 9.



THE
DIARY OF MARTHA BETHUNE BALIOL.

CHAPTER I.

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF HER BELOVED GRANDMOTHER, THE
LADY BETHUNE OF LINCLUDEN: COMMENCED THE 1ST DAY OF
SEPTEMBER, 1753.

THE first day of September.—My beloved grandmother having left Mount Baliol at eight o'clock, A.M., to visit our good friends and cousins, the Græmes, of the Knowe, has requested me to note down all that may occur during her absence, and to acquaint her of the same on her return.

At eight o'clock this morning our coach departed, carrying in it the lady of Lincluden—our pretty kinswoman, Jean Cumyn, and a favourite gaze-hound, of the name of Speed! her own woman also accompanied her; Roger drove the four black Flanders mares, and his son John, and a groom of my brother, Sir Richard, were the outriders; my brother praised Roger for the sleek appearance of his horses, but whispered to me he

would have the coach newly painted for me ere we go to Edinburgh, where we are to pass the winter. I assured him that the coach that did for my grandmother would suffice for me, whereat he laughed, and called me "a demure mouse." Truly, he is an excellent brother. Ere my dear grandmother departed, she gave me a beautiful piece of rose-coloured taffetas. She has also installed Alice Lambskin to be my woman, and to have the charge of my laces; and expressed a hope that she would prove as faithful as her mother, who served in our family upwards of forty years.

Alice tells me that there is sufficient taffetas to make me a sacque and negligée, which, with my cap of Flanders lace that my brother gave me, will, I am told, be a very becoming dress to appear in on my birthday, the seventeenth.

The henwife came to tell me that the *tod* had taken two fat hens and a green goose. I bid the keeper and ranger come to me, and told them that I marvelled how this might be, if they attended to their master's interest; whereat the keeper muttered, "That if Tib would not go sae aften to the Clachan, the *tod* would not get her beasts;" but I sharply desired him not to prate, but to attend to his own affairs.

Memorandum.—To tell my grandmother this matter on her return, and also what Ringwood said about Tib.

My brother went out hunting soon after the departure of my grandmother, and brought home two fine stags; one was a stag royal. I ordered Ringwood to preserve the horns of it for the hall; and my heart

smiting me for having spoken somewhat sharply to him about Tib, I sent a fine haunch to his wife (my nurse), and told him to send my fosterer to fetch the same. He came, and brought me a young eaglet, which he had taken from its nest in the Devil's Chair. He had got sadly wounded by the mother's beak and claws; but he said he did not care about it, he was so proud in having at length procured me an eaglet, which I have long desired. I dressed his wounds with some celebrated salve of my grandmother's, and desired him to get his dinner in the kitchen. I gave him twelve shillings (Scots), and he departed in great glee. He is a brave lad.

At dinner, my brother made merry with me; and we being the only two at table, he several times addressed me as Lady Baliol, his wife! Alice Lambskin was sorry when I told her his jest, as she holds that it is not lucky; so I laughed, and assured her that I had no fear: moreover, that I was too proud of my own name to mourn if I never had another. In the evening I sang a little to my lute, my brother joining with me. In jest he condoled with me for not having gone to the Knowe with my grandmother, who considers me yet too young for company. At nine o'clock, we retired; and I went, as is my custom, to visit the chamber of my dear grandmother, and felt a sore pang in seeing it empty, for never before, since I can remember, have we been separated. Alice waited on me, and begged to leave open the door which separates her chamber from mine. I soon fell asleep, and dreamt that I was going to tread a measure with my fosterer, Ringwood; and

that the viols were playing "Up in the mornin's no for me." I awoke (*September 2*) suddenly, and the music still ringing in my ears, I threw my robe-de-chambre around me, and going to the window I saw my brother standing and giving directions to the ranger to sound a *reveillé*! He called me slug-a-bed, and warned me that already it was past six o'clock; that he was going to visit the Deep-den-chase, and hoped that I would wait breakfast till he returned.

When I went to the dairy I heard from Marjorie, the dairywoman, that she thought Old Peg had bewitched our cow Crummie, as she could get no milk from her. I went to look at the poor beast, but could perceive no difference in her; but I ordered Marjorie to take her to the byre. Marjorie said that she thought that Peg had done it, out of spite for somewhat that she (Marjorie) had said of her pretty daughter Peggie; but I, having heard from others that Marjorie is jealous of Peggie, did not altogether believe the story. I took care, however, not to say this to Marjorie, as she is a good and honest servant; and I find that we have *six* cheeses more this half-year than formerly, and have reared two additional calves. I ordered a *ewe* milk kebbuck to be sent for the table; also to send two pints of sweet milk to old Goody Gordon, at the Clachan, who has two sick grandchildren now with her. I met pretty Peggie, coming to the Mount for something for her mother, who had been ailing all the night. I mentioned what had befallen Crummie; she was grieved and amazed, but in no way took guilt to her. She accompanied me to the house, and I desired the cook to give her some

soup and broken-meat for her mother. I also gave her a bottle of my grandmother's cordial.

At our breakfast, my brother told me that, in the Deep-den-chase, he found a troupe of gipsies, tinklers, and *cairds*, and that he had warned them off his ground; and begged me to caution the maids that they must be doubly careful of all committed to their charge, whilst we have such neighbours. I informed him of the loss of the fowls, and how Marjorie declared that Old Peg had bewitched Crummie. He laughed, and said he thought the gipsies knew the taste of the fowls better than the *tod*, and that most likely poor Crummie had been frightened by the sight of Marjorie's ugly face; she being exceedingly homely in appearance, though a good servant.

I was seated at my wheel, and had well nigh finished my allotted task of a cut, when hearing the trampling of horses in the court, I went to the window to see whom it might be, and saw mine honoured uncle and a stranger gentleman alighting at the door. I desired Alice to follow me whilst I went to the door to bid them welcome. My uncle saluted me, and named the stranger to me: it was Mr. Garden, from the North. My uncle said, he was uncertain what day my grandmother meant to go to the Knowe, and had ridden over to present his young friend to her. My brother now joined us, and pressed my uncle to remain, which he at once consented to do; and, in truth, I believe he made this visit on purpose to inspect my housekeeping.

At two o'clock, for my brother likes late hours the best, the dinner was served, and Sir Richard asked Mr.

Garden to lead me to the dining-room, I being the only lady present. I observed that Mr. Garden seemed amused by the signal which we ever use to announce that dinner is served, the cook chappin with his rolling pin, and he told me that a bell is now rung to call people to their meals; but I answered that it seemed to me that a bell was more suitable for calling folk to prayer and fasting, than to drinking and feasting.

I wore my dames-plum coloured satin negligée, and my second best lace ruffles, but I felt very shy, and was, I fear, very awkward, for this was the first time I had ever sat at the head of the table, and in carving I could not for some time hit the joint, whereat my uncle appeared distressed; but my brother by his lively conversation attracted the attention of Mr. Garden, so that I think he perceived not my awkwardness.

Memorandum.—To practise carving till I be more perfect at it.

My uncle expressed himself well pleased with my deportment, and gave me his blessing when I retired for the night; but before going to my bed-chamber, I went to see that the maids had properly prepared the rooms which my uncle and Mr. Garden were to occupy, and also told Howison to serve them with some good posset when they retired.

SEPTEMBER 3.—Being resolved that my brother should not again call me slug-a-bed, I desired my woman Alice to call me at five o'clock, so that I might have everything in fitting order for the breakfast of my uncle and Mr. Garden.

At arting, my dear uncle again commended me,

and Mr. Garden expressed a hope that we might meet in Edinburgh, where he resides, and where we purpose, God willing, to spend this coming winter. My brother gave them a convoy, he was mounted on his favourite black horse, Soldan; and, in my eyes, there is none that can compare with him. When they had left us I went about my household duties. Marjorie told me that Crummie was now herself again. I reproved her anent the matter of Old Peg, and I myself do blame the gipsies; but she maintained she had tied a bit of rowan tree to her tail, and had put a silver sixpence (she got from my brother to buy a fairing) into her drinking trough. I marvel if that could have done good.

I then read the space of half an hour, and was doing so when Alice Lambskin came to me to consult me on the making of my rose-coloured taffetas. My brother returned in the midst thereof, and having good knowledge of what is suitable, and having moreover much observation in these matters, he advised that I should not have a sacque made of it, but instead a fardingale, or a hoop. I like not the notion of a hoop, so am determined to have a fardingale, and my kind brother has himself written to Mrs. Ellis, the first mantua-maker in Edinburgh, to send me a capuchin, and the newest modes in muffs and aprons. In truth, I am not worthy of such a brother, yet I love him tenderly.

He said he was going a shooting, and proposed that I should accompany him as far as the Spring-well-muir. I hastened to get my hat and muff, and accom-

panied him. On the way he informed me that after the 17th, he purposed visiting his dear friend and comrade, Murray of Kilmaine.

"Murray is one whom you will much esteem, Martha," said he; "for he is as fond of the White Rose as you are:" and then he said he sometimes regretted that in the '45, instead of wielding his sword for his lawful king, he had shed his blood in the service of the elector at Fontenoy. I assured him that that matter had been well redd up to the prince by our grandmother; and that he, in his own courtly manner, had assured her, that he knew that no Baliol or Bethune would have drawn his sword against his lawful king, or left it sheathed when his country required it. He seemed pleased to hear this.

On my return, assisted by Alice, and May Hetley, I preserved some pints of plums—and made some candied Angelica, which Alice assures me is a fine thing for keeping off witches and infection.

When my brother returned, he brought with him some fine black cocks, and muir game, which I saw put carefully into the larder, and then, wearied with my long walk, I retired before nine.

SEPTEMBER 4.—I rose early in order to see that everything might be well in call on the return of my dear grandmother, but the Knowe is at such a distance from this, that I expect her not till afternoon.

I found all going well in the dairy, and remarked to Marjorie that Mr. Garden (but I mentioned no name to her, merely said a gentleman) had told me that but

termilk was one of the finest things for fattening pigs, and that she might take a young porker and try. It can do no harm.

I could not settle to my spinning, but broke my thread so often in rising hastily to look for the coach, that I put aside my wheel, and tried to read, but came no better speed. I went to look for my brother, but found he had gone out with two gaze-hounds which my uncle had brought him. I then went to see how Alice progressed with my fardingale, but just as she proceeded to let me see it, I heard the sound of wheels, and ran hastily to welcome my dear grandmother. She had alighted ere I reached the door, and running towards her I flung my arms round her, and she embraced me tenderly. I then perceived that she was not alone, but was accompanied by a gentleman. I felt ashamed that he should have seen me running, but he appeared to be assisting my grandmother's woman Elspet to keep Speed quiet, and saw not my confusion. "Come hither, Master Edwardes," said my grandmother, "this is a young maiden I hope to see you well acquainted with: this is my granddaughter, Martha Baliol." Mr. Edwardes bowed low, and expressed himself to the effect that he should be well pleased if I would rank him amongst my acquaintance. He then, my brother being absent, offered his arm to my grandmother to assist her up-stairs, whilst Elspet and I followed.

On our way to the oak chamber, where my grandmother always sits, Elspet told me that she was both tired and hungry, Speed having eat all the luncheon that the lady of the Knowe had put into a basket for

her. I ordered her, therefore, to hasten to the cook and get her dinner, whilst I went to attend my grandmother.

On entering the oak chamber, Mr. Edwardes handed me a chair, but he remained standing till both my grandmother and myself entreated that he would be seated.

At her request I then informed her what had occurred during her absence, and mentioned the visit of my uncle and Mr. Garden.

"What Garden is he?" she inquired.

"He is from the North, I believe," I replied, "but resides in Edinburgh."

"Nay, then," quoth she, "it is just Francie Garden: but how comes Bernard to know him, still less to fancy that the sight of him would be a pleasure, the naming of him an honour to me?"

When my brother entered, my granddame led him aside, and conversed earnestly with him; whilst Master Edwardes narrated to me the manner in which they passed the time at the Knowe, and told me that my cousin, Lucy Græme, is of rare and exceeding beauty, and to his mind prettier than either of her sisters. My brother then advanced, and taking Mr. Edwardes by the hand, he greeted him kindly, and expressed the pleasure it gave him to see him (Mr. E.) at Mount Baliol, and hoped he would make it his home as long as it was convenient for him to do so, and more to the same effect; to all of which Mr. Edwardes replied in a suitable manner. My granddame told us then of our cousins, and that she had invited them all to the ball which my

kind brother gives me on the 17th, and also several of their neighbours; and had promised hunting to the young men, and a merry dance to the young maidens. She then retired to her own chamber, and I accompanied her. I brought her my diary, wherewith she was much amused, and advises me to continue it. She says that she will not ask to see it, unless it be my wish.

At dinner we were, as Master Edwardes termed us, *une partie quarrée*, to his thinking the pleasantest of all. He has been so much abroad, that he says he is a stranger to the ways and manners of this country, and has prayed me to instruct him in our customs; and in return, he promises to instruct me in the habits and head-dresses most in vogue, and to describe minutely the number of diamonds in the stomacher of the Pompadour worn at a ball at Versailles, which he was at very lately, and where he had the honour of walking a minuet with the lovely Madame de Choiseul, a countrywoman of his own.

As Master Edwardes practises the foreign fashion of accompanying the ladies to the withdrawing-room, we had time for a walk, and he and my brother pressed me much to accompany them. Getting my muff and capuchin I did so, and we walked to the Deep-den-chase, where we found the gipsies encamped. My brother went to speak to Ringwood about this matter; and an old gipsy no sooner saw him leave us than she came up, and said she would spae our fortunes. I was afraid, and drew back; but Master Edwardes encouraged me, and said, the future could have no terrors

for me, though I might make much woe to others: I was therefore persuaded, and held out my hand. The old woman, who was ugly and dirty, looked at my hand attentively, and then told me that I would travel far, and see many countries; but far as I would travel I would never overtake happiness and — but here, Master Edwardes seeing me turn pale from terror, for in sooth I liked not to hear her, interrupted her, and told her to try his hand: “And, remember, no tricks with me,” said he; “for I had my fortune told by a celebrated necromancer in Paris; so see that you say the same.” He then laughed, and said to me: “She gave you ill luck because you gave her no money. I learnt in Paris, that they see the future more clearly when the present is covered with silver. Is it not so?” and he put some silver into her hand.

She scowled on him, and said: “Ah! French gold—little good has it brought to Scotland.”

“True, mother,” said he, “and English less.”

“Aye, lad,” she replied, “say ye so — then I’m thinking little o’t has come your way.”

He answered, laughing: “Though I am an Englishman; you are right there.”

“English, are ye! then ye come o’ an ill and a cruel kind. Little do me or mine owe them,” she muttered. And then taking his hand, she said: “Aye, an English loof—fyled wi Scotch blude. There’s blude on this hand, for as white as it looks—mony a bludie danger past, and monie mair to come.”

“They’ll be welcome,” he said; “we shall meet as old friends.”

"Friends!—aye, aye, ye say true; it's frae your friens that ye hae maist to fear. Do you see that reid mark crossing the line o' life?—sae young, and sae bonnie!—but it's dim, and I canna see beyond it——" and she stopped.

"Well, mother, what now! I have faced most dangers—what is this one that scares you? believe me, I shall be ready."

"To die a bludie death," she said, solemnly.

"Aye, to die a bloody death! It has been the fate of those nearest and dearest to me; why should it not be mine? Only say, that success crowns my fall; and then welcome death!"

"Success! aye, truly; ye're no the ane to fail in aught that a brave heart, a reddie han, or a winnin tongue can help on: but——"

"Nay," he said, interrupting her, "I'll hear no more. To die in the arms of victory has ever been the lot I most envied;" and at that moment my brother joined us.

"Hola! Edwardes," he said, "are you getting a charm, or having your fortune spaed? Is he to be a lord, and ride in a coach and six? That, I think, is the general reward of merit accorded us here."

"That at least—but this old lady has been trying to frighten me out of a little money by predicting battle, murder, and sudden death. Now in Paris, for half the sum I gave her, my diviner promised me every kind of pleasure, and so pleased was I, that I gave the poor wretch a louis for her pains."

Master Edwardes seemed to treat the matter as a jest, and alluded to it no more: but I could not help

thinking again and again on the words I had heard. I quoted them to my grandmother, but she assured me that the woman was probably angry with him for laughing at her craft, and, having some grudge against the English, had said it on purpose.

In the evening Master Edwardes sang sweetly to us some French romances, and appeared to have quite forgotten the fate foretold him.

CHAPTER II.

SEPTEMBER 5.—The gentlemen were off to the hill early in the morning, so that we saw them not at breakfast. I assisted my grandmother in making arrangements relative to the ball on the 17th, and the number of guests likely to be with us. She tells me that she hopes Master Edwardes will remain over that day, as she esteems him much. I put a leading question to try and hear who he was, but my grandmother merely said, he was the son of a gude frien, and he and all his kith and kin were well known to her, and she looked upon him as her own.

I replied, I thought I must have seen him before, for his face was familiar to me.

She said I had seen him before, many years ago, and then laughing, she added, "But it is scarce seemly in young maidens to stare and gaze, and gossip about those they meet; therefore, dear Mattie, cumber not yourself as to who he is, or what he is, but know that he is a dear young friend of mine. So now go and look if May Hetley has fitly prepared the blue room for him."

"The *blue* room! dear granddame!" I said in amaze-

ment; for the blue room was the one my honoured father had used, and was now our state apartment.

"Yes, burdalane, the blue room;" and then, with a smile, she added, "see that the pictures are weel dusted, and a nosegay in the beau-pots, and I need not charge you, dear child, to let a white rose be in the posie."

I proceeded to the blue room, but found all there ready prepared. The blue room being the one occupied by my honoured father, has been little used since. My mother liked it not after he had left her; and, though heretofore this room has ever been appropriated by the head of the house, my brother affects it not, but has chosen for his own the east turret. We have therefore made it our state-chamber, and it being hung with blue velvet from Genoa, we ever now term it the blue room.

I looked that the pictures were well dusted, and in especial that the portrait of *my* hero of romance, the brave, the chivalrous, though ill-starred Earl of Derwentwater, which hangs on one side of the large fireplace, was free from spec or stain. Amazement! when I raised my eyes to the picture, it was the likeness of Master Edwardes I gazed upon: the same gallant and graceful bearing, the same dark falcon eye and noble brow; the black hair worn in the same style, unpowdered, and hanging in long curls at the back; the small dark mustache shading a mouth of great beauty, but expressing firmness and decision. The picture had a peaked beard, which Master Edwardes lacked, but save for that, and the difference of dress, it was the picture of Master Edwardes. Who then could he be; this

stranger whom my granddame prized so much and honoured so highly? I quitted the blue room hastily, and ran to tell her of my notable discovery, but I found her occupied with Elspet and May Hetley, and not choosing to interrupt her, I hurried away to my own little oriel room, where my brother and I spend great part of our time; and, I blush to write it, instead of occupying myself in some useful or improving employment, I looked not at my wheel, my spinnet was unheeded, and I forgot all about Master Edwardes and the picture, in the perusal of *Sir Charles Grandison*, a book my dear brother has presented to me, and which I find to be of powerful interest and exceeding beauty, though I like not the heroine so much. Unlike any Harriet that ever I knew, she is perfect, too much so to be interesting. My brother says, that frequently in the character as in the opal stone, the beauty consists in a flaw; I will not say the same, but I do allow I feel more interest in Clementina than in Harriet. At length the turret clock warned me that the hour when I accompany my grandmother to walk, was long since past; and ashamed of my negligence, I made a vow not to open my book again for a week; and, hastily closing it, I ran to get my capuchin, and then hurried to the oak parlour, where my grandmother generally sits, and where I found that the gentlemen had returned from the moors, and were deeply engaged in earnest conversation with her. As I opened the door, Master Edwardes said, "No, Sir Richard, the risk is mine only, I stand or fall alone." I fear my temper is bad, and my disposition haughty, for when my grandmother saw

me enter, she evidently showed that she wished not for my company, for she said to me hastily, "Go, Martha, see the game just brought home put into the larder; and do you choose a good bird and make o'it a spatchcock, I warrant our young friend has na tasted one for monie a day." I felt that this was a hint, and a broad one, that I was not wished for; and, mortified at being thus treated as a child before a stranger, I hastily shut the door to conceal the tears of mortification, and I fear of anger, that rose to my eyes. I ran quickly down the grand staircase, but ere I had time to cross the court-yard—for in my evil humour I resolved not to go near the cook, but to show that I felt that it was a mere pretence to get rid of me—I say I had not time to cross the court-yard, when a kind voice said at my ear, "Your kind grandmother has permitted me to visit the cuisine with you; nay, more, promises that you will instruct me in the proper method of making a spatchcock." It was Master Edwardes that spoke to me; and I quickly divined that he wished to spare me the mortification of fancying myself treated as a child, and had made this pretence to join me, but my evil humour had not yet vanished, so I replied drily, that I had no doubt but the cook would instruct him equally well as I could have done; that I was not going to the kitchen, but to the garden instead. He observed that this pleased him still more, as he hoped to obtain my permission to accompany me. I bowed, and we went together, and very soon my evil humour disappeared, and I felt sadly ashamed of having given way to it, especially when I saw the pains Master Edwardes took

to make me feel that *he* had not wished to dispense with my company. At length I said, suddenly:

"Now that I have recovered my equanimity, which was so sadly deranged, and feel ashamed of my petulance, I am satisfied that my dear granddame judged well, that I might hear something which, though it might interest, might neither concern nor edify me; and thought it better to give me some employment to occupy my thoughts. I shall therefore hasten and do her bidding, and regret the ill opinion you must form of my temper and culture;" and I turned to go away.

"Pardon me," said Master Edwardes, "if I detain you yet a few moments. Believe me, had I judged you wrongly, your frank confession would have shown me my error; but in truth I did not so. I felt anxious to tell you the subject we were conversing on, as far as *I* am concerned; but fearing that it might not possess sufficient interest for you, dared not commence till I had your permission to do so. Have I that now?"

"First tell me, does my grandmother know of your intention?"

"Surely; else had I never ventured to mention it to you. I scarce know how to begin my story, Miss Baliol," he said, after the pause of a few minutes: "Have you no recollection of ever having seen me before? Did you never see any one whom I resemble?"

"My grandmother tells me that I have seen you long ago; but I recal neither the place nor time. To-day I was struck by the strange resemblance that you bear to the Earl of Derwentwater."

"Why strange?" he replied, sighing: "he was my father."

"Your father!" I exclaimed; "impossible! You cannot be my playfellow and champion of old, Charley Ratcliff!"

"But indeed I am, as surely as you are the little Martha Baliol of those happy years. Do you not recollect me now, or our last meeting at the Palace of Holyrood, when I was page to Prince Charles, and your dear grandmother brought you, as the only Baliol then in the country, to do homage to your Prince? And do you not remember the Prince taking you in his arms—you, a little fairy thing of eight—and asking you where your white cockade was; which I, in all the pertness of pagehood, and with the freedom of an old companion, had taken from you to wear in my cap, and had promised to dip in the heart's blood of our enemies ere we met again? How little I then fancied what was to be ere we did! And do you remember the Prince taking the cockade from his own bonnet, and telling you that you were his youngest and fairest recruit?"

"Can you suppose I could ever forget that scene?" I replied. "I still preserve the white cockade as one of my dearest treasures."

"And, believe me, the one I obtained from my dear little companion is still in existence—still cherished as a sweet *souvenir* of those times, and of the little friend who gave it. My life, since then, has been a strangely chequered one; yet not one scene of the time I then passed with my Prince has been obliterated from my

memory. No; whilst I have life, I shall never forget those days."

"But why this disguise?" I said; "why not openly return to us as Lord Derwentwater? Can you fancy that you would not be welcome, or though I had forgot my former playfellow, that others would not remember him?"

"Nay, do not say forgot, dear Miss Baliol; merely that you did not at first recognise him: but my disguise is easily accounted for. Those who butchered the uncle and father are not likely to forgive or be forgiven by the son and nephew; and as the attainder has never been removed, though I am Earl of Derwentwater, in this country they do not recognise my title, for here might makes right. I am, therefore, a proscribed man, liable to be seized by the bloodhounds of the law, as my noble father was; and if so, the same doom awaits me. But we honest folk across the water know rather more of all that goes on here than we get the credit of doing; aye, and can make our own use of the knowledge. Information was conveyed to me that a kinsman—I fear I must call him so—is trying for any coronet. In short, denying my father's marriage, he is trying to get the attainder set aside, and declares himself to be the Earl of Derwentwater. The moment I heard of this I wrote to him; gave him the lie in his teeth; and hurried to Scotland to consult how I may best confront the villain, who would now consummate the ruin of our family by heaping on me the shame and misery of a dishonoured name. I knew that Græme of the Knowe was one who esteemed my father much,

and resolved on landing at Leith to proceed thither. My life, Miss Baliol, has been one of distress and danger; yet I scarce think I ever suffered a sadder feeling than I did a few days ago, on entering Edinburgh, and contrasting the solitary progress of a proscribed and outlawed fugitive, stealing back to his own country to defend his father's name—the sole inheritance he had to leave an only child—with the triumphal entry of the same individual a few years previous—then a boy of fourteen—flushed with a recent victory; marching close to his princely master, followed by brave clans.”

Master Edwardes—no, that name no more—from me he shall ever receive his own—the Earl of Derwentwater stopped here, and the tears rose to his large dark eyes, which had so lately flashed with enthusiasm. For myself—I could not help it—I felt a choking sensation at my throat, and my tears gushed forth when I thought how bright our hopes then were, how faded and dim now; and if I thus felt the contrast, what must he not do!

“I beseech you do not grieve thus, my dear Miss Baliol,” said he; “I ought to have known your kind heart better, and not thus to have pained it, narrating my own sad feelings. My tale is well nigh finished. I proceeded to the Knowe, first taking the precaution of assuming a *nom de guerre*, which, in truth, is my own, I being a godson of Prince Charles. Mr. Græme knew me not, and I found that old times were forgotten. The Elector was now all-powerful, and I might bring distress and difficulty on any who took my part. Mr. Græme knows me as Mr. Edwardes only; as I was thus

introduced to him by an old friend across the water: but all were not so blind. Your kind excellent grandmother at once recognised me; and leading me aside, asked if she was in the wrong in styling me Lord Derwent-water. I told her who I was, and explained my motive for coming to this country. She received me as the son of her dear friend; offered me the hospitality of her house; and in her grandson's name promised that he would use his endeavour to have my rights confirmed. Sir Richard, with a kindness far beyond my hopes, has promised to do so, and we were conversing on this subject when you entered. Do not fancy, Miss Baliol, that your grandmother could have had any motive for not telling you, but the simple one that the keeping of a secret is always attended with difficulty, sometimes with danger; and she wished to spare you both. But now it would have so much the appearance of treating you without confidence, that I requested permission to tell you. Your brother has promised me his support—may I hope that I have Miss Baliol's good wishes?"

My lord added some flattering speeches, but I will not write them down: were I to believe them, they would make me proud to merit them. But I will not allude to this matter.

Hearing that I kept a diary, he has requested me to make a memorandum that he hopes to have the honour of being my partner on the 17th; I said it not to him, but I thought I was not likely to forget, though he avers that possibly I may.

After dinner, we all rode together. As we were

cantering along, a hare suddenly crossed before us, closely pursued by two gaze-hounds; and in an instant a lady, mounted on a superb chestnut horse, came galloping up.

"Madge Murray, as I live!" exclaimed by brother; and giving his horse the spur, in a moment he was by her side. Lord Derwentwater asked me if I also wished to follow.

"No," I replied; "I am rather nervous riding across the country, and Madge flies like the wind. Ha! there is her brother Harry."

Harry rode up and accosted us thus:

"I knew you a long way off: I knew you a great way off, cousin Martha. I knew you before Madge did: I said it was you and Sir Richard; I don't know you," he said, turning to the Earl; "but I knew you and Sir Richard before Madge did," nodding to me.

The Earl looked amazed at this strange salutation, but a single glance at poor Harry explained his sad state. More perfect features than his I never saw; but one beauty, the beauty of intellect, was wanting: his deep blue eyes were faultless as to colour and shape, yet devoid of all intelligence: and his mouth, perhaps the most expressive of all the features, had a listless look.

"Is that a son of the beautiful Mrs. Murray, of Ashton?" said the Earl to me.

"Yes, do you recognise the likeness?"

"I do indeed; the same features—but yet how different! The first time I ever saw her was when King James was proclaimed at the cross of Edinburgh,

and she, mounted on horseback, with a drawn sword in her hand, and profusely decorated with white ribbons, remained there during the ceremony, and aught more radiantly beautiful than she was, I never saw ; she shed a halo of enthusiasm round her, that was reflected by all who were near her ——”

“ Ah ! here they come,” cried Harry : “ Madge first, of course. Sir Richard never could keep up with Madge. Ah, Madge, I told you I knew them ; was I not right ?”

“ Quite right,” said Madge, her intelligent countenance assuming a look of peculiar affection and interest, as it always did when she addressed or listened to poor Harry.

“ And the dogs—did Fingal or Ossian run best ?”

“ Fingal by far the best ; he turned puss three times before Ossian did it once.”

“ There !” exclaimed Harry delighted. “ You see I’m right again, and I knew them before you, eh, Madge ? Do you allow that I was right ?”

“ Indeed I do, Hal : I have fairly lost my bet : Ossian is yours for ever.”

“ Good dog, good dog !” cried Harry, leaping off his horse and caressing Fingal, whilst a keeper was covering it from the cold. “ And I was right about Sir Richard and Martha ; but I don’t know the other,” he continued.

“ The other, Harry, is a friend of mine, Mr. Edwardes,” said my brother ; but Harry was again caressing his dog. Madge had taken off her hat, and was

fanning herself with it. Sir Richard named Master Edwardes to her. She looked a moment at the groom, and seeing he was too deeply occupied with the dog to heed us, she said :

"Not at all, cousin Dick ; it's Charley Ratcliff, the page whom I mortally offended one night at Holyrood, by asking what relation the notorious Daddie Ratcliff was to him." She hummed the words " Weel wad I my true luve ken, amang ten thousand hieland men ;" and then putting on her hat and holding out her hand, she added, "but I am quite sure that Lord Derwentwater has long ago forgiven me."

"The only thing Lord Derwentwater cannot forgive Miss Murray, is fancying that he could be offended at the interest she took in his relations," replied the Earl, bowing.

"And now, Madge, what next ?" said my brother.

"Why, I see they have brought up the puppies, so I fancy we must give them a course ; eh, Harry ? Shall we give Skiff and Dart a trial ?" she continued.

"Or ride over to the Mount with us, and see my new gaze-hounds," said my brother.

"I should like that, Madge," said Harry.

"But, Hal, it would be quite dark ere we left, and we could not see the puppies run," she replied.

"And that's true—no, we wont go."

"Nonsense, man ! Come you must !" said my brother.

"Not if Madge says no," answered Harry.

"But Madge will say yes. Wont you, Madge ? You

shall have a dish of tea, and a gossip with Martha, and Harry shall see the gaze-hounds, and then a brisk ride home by moonlight."

"So be it !" cried Madge ; "lead on."

"Nay, fair cousin," replied my brother, bowing, "do you lead and I shall ever follow."

They gave directions to the keeper to return to the hall with the dogs, and then we started to return home ; but scarce was Harry mounted when he began to wager that his pony would trot against my brother's horse. Madge, as a matter of course, supported Harry, so off they started, leaving Lord Derwentwater and me to return at leisure. Truly we had a pleasant ride ; but as our horses were somewhat warm, we walked them most of the way ; consequently the others were at the Mount a considerable time before us ; and when I entered the room, after laying aside my riding gear, I found Madge seated on a low stool at my grandmother's feet, Sir Richard and Harry being also present.

CHAPTER III.

"So, fair cousin," said Madge, "you are a sad lag-gard. Here have I been telling my dear grannie" (this is a pet name she gives Lady Lincluden, who is *not* her grandmother) "all the news of the country, but I have kept a nice bit for you. Open wide your ears, hear and believe that the delectable pink of perfection, Miss Peggie Paterson, has at last met with one capable of understanding her ; and, in three weeks, I am asked to dance at her wedding!"

"Peggie Paterson! I'm blythe to hear it ; she will make a gude wife get her who may!" exclaimed Lady Lincluden.

"In that case, Grannie, I regret she has been allowed to remain so long an indifferent spinster," said Madge, laughing.

"But who is the happy man, Madge?" said my brother.

"Who is he? Why no one that you, or any of us know. He is a Glasgow weaver by birth ; one of Hawley's dragoons by profession ; Mungo Buchanan by name," replied Madge.

"Mungo Buchanan! one of Hawley's dragoons!! the son of a Glasgow weaver!!!" exclaimed my grandmother. "My gudeness, the lassie's in a creel! Madge, it can never be, that a niece of the gude Sir Hugh Paterson would marry a sidier roy, let alane a Glasgow weaver."

"True, nevertheless, if I am to believe her: also, I think she is well mated."

"Weel mated, Madge!" exclaimed my grandmother, "what harm did the lassie ever do ye that ye say that?"

"The *lassie* never did me any, for she had ceased to be one long ere I knew her; but ever since I remember she has been held up as an example to all the girls of the county."

"Quite enough to make them dislike her," said Lord Derwentwater.

"Even so; and as Mungo Buchanan is, according to her, perfect in every manly virtue, and she in female worth, I hold that they are well mated: besides, he has siller and she has none: how goes the old song, grannie,

'He had money, and she had none,
And that's the way her love began.'

But I shall miss her much, for she never sees me but she tells me that she has many an anxious moment about me."

"So have I, Madge," said my grandmother.

"The anxiety is not all on her side, dear grannie; for as I told her I often wish she would cease advising me, and am anxious beyond measure for her being settled as far from the hall as possible, and then she will be my dearly beloved cousin *once* removed."

"And I say marry Peggie Paterson who may, they will get a gude wife," said Lady Lincluden.

"And I, dear grannie, am not so base as to envy him his happiness, as indeed I told her."

"Ah, Madge, Madge, that tongue of yours will get you many enemies, and never gain a friend, believe an auld woman, dawtie, and bridle the unruly member."

"My dear grannie, those that cannot take a jest from me, may e'en keep away. I never forsake a friend; I never forget a foe; and my crowning evil in Miss Peggie's eyes is, that I don't care a rush what she or the world says of me."

"More's the pity, Madge," said my grandmother, "more's the pity. Ye're owre young to hae mickle wit, and owre foolish to hae few faults; let me never hear you say the like again. And now, burdalane," said my grandmother to me, "haste and make tea, and gie this silly bairn something to put into her mouth, to prevent such idle clashes coming out."

I hastened to comply with my grandmother's orders; but I fear Madge was not convinced. When we had finished tea, Madge rose, and declared that it was time for them to leave.

"We shall see you on the 17th?" said Lady Lincluden.

"I think not," she replied.

"Nay, but you must come." Sir Richard earnestly entreated the same; and I, too, added my supplications.

"What is it you wish?" said Harry, coming forward.

"We wish Madge to come to a ball on the 17th."

"A ball! oh that's brave. Oh yes, she will come."

I'll come, and you may be sure Madge will. Eh! Madge?" cried he, eagerly.

"Meantime, mount and go! Harry," cried Madge.

Sir Richard offered her his hand, to lead her down stairs; and I think he whispered something about continuing the song; but I may be mistaken, for she gave a laugh, and said, "Peggie Paterson will now do that;" and she sang—

"Mirk is the nicht—I daurna bide
(Sweetest the merle sings o' a),
And lanely is the road I ride—
(Neist my heart lies the rose o' snaw)."

When the door was closed, I said of Madge that I loved her right dearly, and that Lord Derwentwater must not fancy that she would harm Peggie Paterson; for of Madge one might say, that "her bark was waur nor her bite, and she was no one's enemy save her own."

"And what worse ane could she have, my dear lassie?" said Lady Lincluden. "My Lord is a soldier, and he will tell you that whilst the citadel remains true, the loss of the outposts is as nothing; and if Madge be her ain enemy, wha can stand her friend? Not that Madge is an ill lassie—for I loe her dearly—but she is different from others; and singularity should ever be avoided in the young—but Madge is no an ill lassie."

"No treason against Madge," said my brother, entering; "she is my friend and companion, and I will hear nothing against her."

"Content yourself, Sir Richard, we said nane," said my grandmother.

"No! they had best think twice, ere they speak ill

of Madge once. In the first place, she gives no quarter, and in the next, if you go to your closet and whisper merely a word about her to your dearest friend, assuredly the walls carry her the intelligence; for ere long she knows it all: *how*, I cannot conceive, but that she does, I have often had proof. But that surely is nothing against her."

"From the eager way in which you defend Miss Murray, one would think some one had been attacking her," said Lord Derwentwater, "yet I assure you such was not the case."

"Attacking her! so there is," said Lady Lincluden: "do you not see he is defending her from himself; his better judgment tells him that Madge is too wild and independent for a woman, but she has cast the *glamour* owre him, and he is trying to think that all is right that she does. Yet, were Martha to act thus, he would not allow it."

"Martha! truly, no! she would be an indifferent copy——"

"Of a bad original," said a voice behind him, and turning round, we saw Madge standing at the door.

"Don't stare so, sweet coz, as if I were a ghost come back to punish my murderers, and terrify them to disclosures. As we passed poor Sandy Johnstone's cottage we found they were in sore distress, one of the children being ill; so we rode back to get something for the poor wean, and you were all so busy talking, and the room so dark that you never saw me enter, so I thought it best to save Dick the trouble of painting my character by summing it up in three words, *a bad original*. Now

do, dear Grannie, haste and give me something for the child."

My Grandmother left the room, but soon returned, followed by the old butler, bearing a basket with necessary cordials for the sick child.

"Gude e'en to you, Howison," said Madge. "If the basket be ready, I must hasten away, for I have eight miles across the country, and the moon not so old as I could wish it."

"Would you allow me to escort you, Miss Murray?" said Lord Derwentwater.

"Escort me! Truly no; but I thank you all the same. Harry will protect me from all *earthly* foes, and should we meet others——"

"Wheest! wheest! Miss Murray," said Howison, "wha kens what may be near you. Gude be atween us and a harm. The *Warlock's Knowe*, and the *Dead-man's Moss*, are no that canny in the day, let alane the night: are ye no fleyed?"

"I am a Murray, Howison, and know not fear: a Murray of Ashton, and court danger:" and waiting no longer, she ran lightly down stairs; and, in a moment afterwards, we heard the clatter of the horses' hoofs, as she and Harry galloped down the approach.

"I'm thinking ye're a Murray, and some skeerie. They're a' a thocht queer in the tap storey," muttered Howison, as he left the room.

"Is Miss Murray perfectly safe riding so late, and so poorly attended?" said Lord Derwentwater.

"Oh, yes, perfectly so," replied my brother. "Harry would cut down any who dared molest her; but, in

truth, she is so well known, and so well liked by all around, that none would attempt such a thing."

"She's a brave lassie, that I'll never deny: she has her father's wit, and the courage of her clan; and were the secretary to raise another regiment of light horse, he would need no freemint folk to lead them; for I'm mista'en if Madge would give place to Colonel Bagot."

"The secretary's character," said Lord D., "has ever been a puzzle to me—to all, indeed, who knew him. His bravery none can deny, it was too often proved: he discharged the perilous task of publishing the manifestoes, and warning the different parties, with a courage never surpassed, and address unequalled. He was in constant danger of arrest for three weeks, ere he quitted that occupation to join the Prince: his stratagem for surprising the Duke of Argyle, and his ruse of misleading government by false information, were admirably conceived, and, had they been well followed up, would have been of incalculable service to our cause. He was entrusted with the internal management of the whole scheme. He acted as guide to the Camerons when they surprised and captured the town of Edinburgh. Yet this man was capable of betraying us, to save his life."

"No, my lord, pardon me—not to save his life; but, as Howison says, they are *skerris*," said Lady Lincluden.

"And facing death on the field of battle is very different from meeting the same grizzly shade on the scaffold, after the spirit has been broken by a long and cruel imprisonment," said my brother.

"It is indeed different. Who would not volunteer to lead a forlorn hope? who would fear to march up to the deadly breach? and yet how few of us can meet death calmly on the scaffold:—how much greater the courage of acting like a man there, where death is robbed of its glory——"

My lord's voice faltered. I doubt not he was overpowered by sad recollections, and thought of the heroic courage displayed by his two nearest and dearest relatives on the scaffold; who had indeed

"Encountered darkness as a bride, and hugged her in their arms."

After a pause he resumed:—"And Miss Murray—does she know? and her mother, her heroic mother! how bitterly she must have felt the utter worthlessness of a life purchased by betraying others!"

"She did, indeed, feel it bitterly; so much so, that her life soon fell a sacrifice. Madge, poor lassie, knows nothing of it; poor bairn! she has sorrows enow to bear, without breaking heart and spirit—as it would, did she know the truth. She was so young at the time of her father's imprisonment, that she was not told how he saved life and lands—how dearly he bought them, and I trust she may ever remain in ignorance; but when I hear the free use she gives her tongue, I often tremble lest some one retorts on her. Her father fears the same, and keeps her so secluded that we are the only family she is intimately acquainted wi; and poor Harry her only companion: and he is at once her greatest grief, and chief joy. You must know, she blames hersel, and no without reason, of being the

cause of his misfortune. A finer, braver, bonnier boy than Harry Murray never gladdened a father's heart. Madge was aye a bauld lassie, and being four years aulder than Harry, was the leader in all their sports. They were ever fond of riding, as ye see. One sad day, they were amusing themselves in leaping, they came to a stane-dike; Madge cleared it at once; Harry hung back, a little nervous. Madge, who knew not fear, urged him to follow; and when that wadna do, she taunted him wi letting a lassie gang where he was feared to follow. Harry was a real Murray, and the taunt struck home; he raised his pony to the leap; both fell, and his head came against the stanes of the dike, and there he lay, senseless. Madge, poor Madge! ye may imagine her agony at seeing her darling lying dead before her. She uttered no cry; she shed no tear; but taking the bairn in her arms, carried him back to the hall. She walked into the room where her father was sitting, and laying him down at his feet, she said, 'It's your son, and my only brother, that I have murdered.' Ashton saw that he would soon be childless if he was harsh wi the wretched lassie; he asked nae questions, uttered nae reproach, but carried the bairn to Madge's room, and laid him down on Madge's bed. The doctor was sent for, and he said there was life, and where there's life there's hope. Harry recovered his health, but his mind was gone for ever. And now came Ashton's punishment; and oh! is it no a heavy one? He had turned king's evidence on his friends: he had betrayed the confidence of his Prince; and a' to keep the bonny lands o' Ashton for his young son; for I will

never believe that the fear o' death made him do it; and he lives to see the bairn he sacrificed his honour for, a poor harmless innocent! What Madge suffered nane can tell, she never did; but night and day she sat beside the boy, and watched his return to health—to health without reason! Poor Madge, she had need of her brave spirit now. From that day to this she has never been separated from him, and never will. She watches over him with all a mother's care, and has adopted, like a brother, all his pursuits, and tries as far as she can to fill his place with her father. You may wonder, I'm sure I often do, that with him ever before her, she can keep up the brave spirit she has; yet it is a blessing from heaven; for what would become of Harry were she to turn dowie, and who would be to him what Madge is? They are all the world to each other, and she lives but for him and her father."

"If," said my brother—"if her expiation for an unintentional injury ought to be a life of tears and loud reproaches, then is Madge guilty of neglecting to atone for the evil she has done; but if a life devoted exclusively to the being she thinks she has irreparably injured; if by the daily sacrifice of her time, hopes, and wishes, she can at all compensate, then does Madge most nobly, most cheerfully do her duty; and I doubt not, dear grandmother, that the thought of it costs Madge many a salt tear, many a bitter sigh, unheard and unseen indeed, but not the less sincere."

CHAPTER IV.

SEPTEMBER 6, 1753.—This day being Sunday we saw not Lord Derwentwater at breakfast, as he had left the Mount early in the morning to ride to *Cartbrechan*, where there is a Catholic chapel and priest, as he belongs to that persuasion. My Grandmother not feeling well, my brother and I preferred walking by the fields to the room where divine service is performed, instead of driving. The sun was shining brightly, and the air mild and clear, and we enjoyed our walk much. When we arrived near the village, where we assemble to worship God after the manner of our forefathers, we found there was to be no service that day. We heard that a party of soldiers was there, with orders to disperse the congregation, should it assemble, and lay violent hands on the clergyman. I fear they would have done both, but Mr. Erskine had been advertised of the matter by a safe hand early in the morning, and had stationed scouts at different points to warn his flock *not* to assemble. Truly these are hard times; a stranger on the throne dictating to us the dress we must wear, nay, even the method in which we must offer up our

prayers to heaven. My brother received the intelligence in silence, and looked deeply concerned when we turned. He then said:

"I vow these severe enactments are enough to produce the evil they so much dread."

"How much do they think we will bear?" I remarked.

"I know not, but it is hard that a man may not worship after his own fashion, but must do so by parliamentary rules. Fools that they are, they increase the evil they are trying to cure; and rather make (as in my own case), than gain the disaffected. There is a peaceable clergyman, one who has taken the oaths; nay, prayed for the king by name, liable to be seized as if guilty of a crime, because he adheres to the bishops by whom he was ordained; and I, myself, who have shed my blood for this king, prevented in my religious duties. If they strain the chord so tightly, it must break."

"And in a happy hour, it cannot come too soon," I replied.

"Dear child," replied my brother, "you speak rashly, not knowing what you say; could you but see the horrors of war, you would ever pray from being involved in them. The HERO of '45 is no more, and the blood I would freely have shed in HIS cause shall never be wasted in attempting to bring back a man to rule over us, who cannot govern himself. It could be no light matter that could have induced Macnamara to take leave of him in these words: 'By what crime, Sir, can

your family have drawn down the wrath of heaven, since it has visited every branch of them through so many ages!

"No, my dear Martha, the hero of '45 I admire and respect. Prince Charles of '53, I would not help to mount the throne of his fathers."

"And does Lord Derwentwater judge thus severely his Prince?" I inquired, with an aching heart.

"It is a subject we never allude to. Derwentwater is bound to the Prince and his cause by ties of blood and vengeance. The hour that restores to Charles Stuart his kingdom, restores Charles Ratcliff to rank and wealth. To the present royal family he owes nothing but vengeance; to the former gratitude. The Guelphs have been his merciless enemies; the Stuarts his constant benefactors; but, look you, here he comes to give you his own answer."

Lord Derwentwater then joined us, and together we walked back to the Mount. I asked if he had been more fortunate at Carbrechan than we had been; he said he had, and that he had excited no little attention; or rather, he added, curiosity in the small chapel, for there were not above twenty present, and the Drummonds being absent, they seemed quite at a loss to discover who he could be, as they knew he could not be a guest at the castle. I asked him if he had seen many on his way there, he said several, but knew none.

My Grandmother was very wroth when she heard there had been no service, and she said to Lord Derwentwater:

"The church is in ruins, the state is in jars,
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars,
We daurna weel say't, but we ken wha's to blame,
There'll never be peace till King Jamie comes hame."

Lord Derwentwater smiled sadly, and said:

"Oh, there's naught frae ruin, my country to save,
But the keys o' kind heaven to open the grave,
That a' the noble martyrs, wha died for loyalty,
May rise again, and fight for their ain countrie."

After dinner, my Grandmother asked Sir Richard if he had shown Lord Derwentwater the view from the top of the tower; he said he had not, but if his lordship felt inclined to climb to the skies, he would assist him.

We then proceeded to climb the stair which leads to the top, and our eyes getting accustomed to the darkness we proceeded merrily, and without fear. I may truly say so, for so often have I been up and down, that even the ladder has no terrors for me. Lord Derwentwater complimented me on my bravery, but I assured him I was a great coward, and only not frightened here, being used from infancy to ascend. When we got out on the top of the tower, the view never, I thought, appeared more lovely. In the foreground, were the fine old trees which are round the Mount. To the north, a chain of hills, behind which the sun was setting in a flood of golden light,—to the right lay the river, broad and deep, and on the left the woods of the Deep-denchase, the foliage of which already showed traces of autumn.

Lord Derwentwater was enthusiastic in his admiration of its beauty, and my brother appeared gratified at hearing his place judiciously praised. The evening was chilly, but we could not tear ourselves from the

view. My brother, since he has been in the wars, smokes much, having acquired the habit in Holland. He offered Lord Derwentwater a pipe, but he declined it, and then Sir Richard retired to one side, not to annoy me with the smoke, although, in truth, I do not dislike it.

Lord Derwentwater and I walked up and down the battlements; we talked not much: there is a silence that speaks: the words he *did* say I shall not note down: they can never be forgotten.

"So, fair sister," said Sir Richard, joining us, "have you at last settled in what way and from which point the old tower may most easily be assailed; for the last ten minutes your eyes have never been raised from the hall-door; before that, the oriel wing attracted your attention, and as I have finished my second pipe since you commenced the survey, I think it best to warn you that the shades of evening, as well as its dews, are rapidly falling, and with your leave we will leave the Sally Port and North Bartizan till a future day."

I was very glad that the shades of evening were falling, for it prevented my brother from seeing how his plesantry dyed my cheeks with blushes. We then descended. The descent is more perilous than the ascent—so his lordship assured me—and therefore, he said, he behoved to assist me, more than I deemed necessary. My brother laughed, and begged of him not to spoil his little Mattie by teaching her to be a fine lady with nerves; and vowed that Madge Murray would run down the ladder as if it were a stair; nay, if necessary, would not hesitate to jump it!

"Not presuming to censure Miss Murray, I cannot regret that Miss Baliol is so very different," said Lord Derwentwater—and then, in a voice that *I* only heard, he added—"In my eyes, Miss Baliol could not be improved by being otherwise than she is."

Truly, it is exceedingly silly in me to note these things in my book: perchance it may be the fashion of all gentlemen thus to talk, and I, never seeing any but my brother, may give more heed to these flattering words than one who has seen more of society.

When we came down, my grandmother asked Sir Richard if he had pointed out to Lord Derwentwater the direction in which the different places lay.

"No, good sooth," said he, "I did not. I consoled myself with my pipe, and whilst the smoke curled around me, I thought such is life: flesh is grass, so is tobacco, both turn to ashes, and our aspirations end in smoke. But Martha, who knows them well, pointed them out to him."

I had *not* done so, but he came to my assistance, and asked Lady Lincluden where the Drummonds were: in her anxiety to assure him they would be here on the 17th, she forgot the matter she had been discussing before. She then, as is her custom, assembled all the servants; first, the younger ones repeated their catechism, and then my brother read a sermon aloud. I am ashamed to own I gave it not the attention I ought to have done; for, in despite of my resolutions, my thoughts would revert to the top of the tower, and the sweet words Lord Derwentwater there spoke to me; but I will not continue this subject, and yet I fear I

think on little else, for when I fell asleep his image was the last before me.

SEPTEMBER 15TH.—It is some days since I have written in my diary. Though unmarked, they have been very pleasant to me: we have either walked or ridden together each day. My brother has been trying the fishing: as Lord Derwentwater cares not for that sport, we generally accompanied Sir Richard to the river side, and, leaving him there after a little, explored the banks, and wandered through the woods: but to-day Lucy Græme comes, and she will join our rambles. He tells me that Lucy is now of exceeding beauty. I have not seen her since her return from school; but ere she went, she gave great promise. I asked what style her beauty was. He replied: "Fair and feminine, as a woman should be." I long to see her. I wonder if I shall like her as much as Madge, as much as I did when we were young.

Lucy has come—truly she is very beautiful; so delicately fair, with deep blue eyes, and a complexion like a rose. We were in the pleasance when the coach drove up with her in it. My brother hastened to meet her. Lord Derwentwater did not go. I ran to welcome her, and found her the same dear girl I parted with, some two years ago. My Grandmother folded her to her heart, and then desired me to lead her to her room. As the dinner hour was close at hand, I requested her to dispense with a *grand toilet*, as we purposed going in the evening to the Devil's Chair, to see the moon rise. She requested me to remain with her, and soon was ready.

"Burdalane," said the Lady Lincluden to me, "how do you purpose going to the rocks to-night? I dare say it is a matter of four miles from this: do you walk?"

"No truly: we purpose riding, and Ringwood, my fosterer, is to meet us at the crags; he is the best cragsman in the country, and will assist us."

"Complimentary to Edward and me," said my brother.

"Dear cousin," said Lucy to me, "pray leave me behind. I am such a wretched coward, I should only be a burden to the party."

"Leave you, Lucy—nay, that I won't: if you don't go, I shall not; but indeed you need have no dread; you shall ride old *Britomart*, and it is so steady, it never shies, and so old, it cannot run away."

"Impossible," said Lucy: "indeed, I cannot ride. I'd sooner walk."

"Walk!" exclaimed my brother: "never, whilst I have arms to bear so fair a burden: you shall do neither—you shall sail up. Then you will have only half a mile to walk; and Martha will meet us at the foot of the rocks, unless she prefers to row in the same boat."

"Willingly!" "Thanks, cousin!" we both exclaimed: and then we hastened to prepare for the sail. We were soon equipped, and hastening to the little creek where the boat-house is. The stream was against us, so they had to row up.

Ringwood was seated at the foot of the crags waiting us; and, after great exertion, we *did* sit in the chair. Lucy was very frightened, and required the assistance

of Sir Richard and Ringwood ; and Sir Richard, who dearly loves a joke, told her of an adventure he and Madge had here, by way of raising her courage, and how they lost their way in the mist, and he actually paused once or twice, ere he followed Madge, who skipped from rock to rock, and across the yawning chasms, like a young kid, till they reached a little cave where they rested till the mist cleared away. But at last we did sit in the Devil's Chair. I asked my brother why it was so called—he knew not.

“ If Madge were here she could, or at least would tell you the why and the wherefore, but for the life of me I never can recollect a legend. Do you know, Ringwood ?” turning to him.

“ An it please ye, Sir Richard,” replied he. “ It's no athegither chancy to speak o' sic things here: there's the mune rising abune the Witch's Cairn, and wha can tell what may be the rising wi her.”

“ Surely you are not afraid,” said my brother.

“ Na deil a fear hae I—gude forgive me for naming him here—na, gin you and the leddies are no fleyed, I'm nae,” replied he.

“ No, Ringwood, we have no fear ; tell us what you know,” I said.

The substance of the tale was this—Long, long ago, in a cavern near the Devil's Chair, dwelt a pious old hermit, renowned for his sanctity far and near. One of the neighbouring barons, a rude and riotous man, did mightily oppress this poor recluse. This Baron—so ran the story—had sold himself to the Evil One, on condition, that for a certain number of years every wish

of his should be complied with: if that promise was broken, then was the Baron free. Years rolled by—the Baron had every wish gratified—he was powerful; he was rich; he was feared; and look where he would, he saw his own land stretched before him. At last he was warned that the treaty was nigh over—three more days and the enemy would carry him off; and then of what avail all his rank, wealth, or power? Was not the meanest of his serfs more to be envied than he—the lord of all around him? On the last night but two, the Evil One appeared—reminded him of the bargain, and how he had kept his faith: cited up the number of wishes which had been promptly gratified, and warned the Baron that in three nights he would return for him. The Baron was in despair; now, when too late, the horror of his situation came over him, and he felt how poor was the gain compared to the loss. He thought seriously how little time was left for repentance, still less for reparation; but something might yet be done. At that time, the course of the river was quite different from what it now is, and the peasants suffered much from want of water; the Baron therefore wished that, ere the morrow, the bed of the river should be altered. Next morning his domestics awoke him with the astounding news that the river had altered its course to the present one; and the Baron knew that it was as he willed it. He then thought on the holy man whom he had so cruelly oppressed, and determined to do him a service. Near the place where the chair now is, there is a deep hole where the water collects, and to this hole

the hermit had to repair when he wished for water : so the Baron ordered a path to be cut in the rocks to the well, and a chair made for the old man to rest his wearied limbs in, what time he climbed the rocks to draw water.

Now such was the sanctity of the holy hermit, that the enemy of mankind scarce dared approach the cave where he was, and had the old man, as was his wont, continued most of the night counting his beads, the Evil One durst not have ventured near the spot, and so the Lord of the Castle would have been saved. But the Baron now began to reap the fruits of his evil deeds. He had forbid the peasantry to assist the old man, and they, dreading his wrath, only ventured by stealth to do aught for him; and having been without food or water all the previous day, he had been occupied this day in climbing the rocks to the well, and in wandering through the woods in search of roots and pulse, which formed his meagre diet; and wearied out with these exertions, soon after midnight the old man laid himself down on his bed of leaves, and slept peacefully though the enemy was near; for his guardian angel was more powerful, and kept watch over his slumbers.

Next day, a forester brought the Baron word that during the night a stair had been cut in the face of the rock; and the proud man felt there was no hope; and bare-headed and bare-footed, he went, a humble penitent, to the old hermit, to beseech his forgiveness, and to implore his counsel. The old hermit received him as if he had never been wronged, and listened to his tale: he

then told him to remain all the day in prayer in his cell, at night to return to the castle; and when the enemy appeared, to speak as he would instruct him.

The Baron did so, and at night returned to his castle; and, the first time for many years, he took a rosary his mother had given him when he was a child, which had long lain neglected and uncared for in a cabinet, and hung it round his neck; and seating himself in his large chair, he quietly awaited the terrible visitor. At length, he knew he was in the presence of the Evil One.

"I have fulfilled your behests," said the awful figure; "I now come to claim the fulfilment of your bargain."

"Stay," said the Baron. "I have yet one more to make."

"Haste, then, for time presses."

"Heretofore my every wish has been granted: this now is my last:—That ere I go with you to the place of torment I merit, you undo all the evil I have done?"

"Impossible! in a moment undo the evil done in a life of unlimited power, of unbounded license and rapine!"

"Hence, then, foul fiend! your power over me is at an end. Hence, and know if thou canst not undo it, I can live to repent it,—for by this I swear"—and here the Baron raised the crucifix to his lips—"by this I swear, that the life, over which you have no power, shall henceforth be devoted to repentance and atonement."

Next day, the Baron was sought for in vain; but on the table near his chair was found a deed, conveying

his own lands to holy Mother Church, and those which he had unjustly wrested from his neighbours were restored to them or their heirs. Next evening's sun set on two hermits in the cell; and soon after, a goodly monastery stood where the Baron's proud castle had been. The old hermit died there in peace, but the younger passed his time in the cell, and lived but to help and succour the poor and aged; and when the first gallant band of warriors crossed the seas to fight for the Holy Sepulchre, this hermit also went, and was heard of no more.

"Bravo! Ringwood," cried my brother, when the youth had finished. "Bravo! Ringwood, you speak like a book-man; now, how much of this story do you believe?"

"No muckle abune the half, Sir Richard: but ye sud hear Miss Murray tell it. It gars my flesh creep to hear her—ye wad think *auld hornie* was stannin glowrin at ye the wye she looks at ye."

"Madge is flattered by the comparison no doubt. Wrap up now ladies. Lucy, remember what Lord Chesterfield says:

'Keep all cold from your chest,
There's already too much'—

and now, Edwardes, take care of Martha whilst I assist Lucy."

"Ha! messieurs, en route—en route;" said Lord Derwentwater, and, taking my hand, he assisted me down. We were soon seated in the boat, and whilst the bonny Lady Mune shone on us, we sped gaily along, wind and stream favouring us. The moonbeams glit-

tered on the waters, broken by the track of our pretty boat, and our white sail caught the night breeze which sighed as we passed. We requested the Earl to sing to us ; his voice is ever rich and melodious ; and as I now heard it, never did it sound more lovely : he sang Sir C. Sedley's lyric :

" Ah, Chloris, could I now but sit."

My brother and Lucy were loud in their praises, but I could not speak mine. They were talking of music, and requesting another song, when suddenly—I know not how it happened—a fearful gust came down the mountain pass : the river, in one instant, seemed covered with foam.

" Hard up !" shouted Lord Derwentwater ; " down with the sail : " but ere the order could be obeyed, the squall took us, and the next moment the boat was capsized ! I remember distinctly struggling in the water. I tried in vain to support myself : my wet clothes clung to me and dragged me down—down—down. I felt the waters closing over me. I thought of my poor grandmother ; of my dear brother. The words I had just heard sung were ringing in my ears, and a thousand little incidents of the childhood we had passed together, and long since forgotten, in that dreadful moment came fresh across my memory. I struggled in despair, and once more my head was above the water. I saw some one approaching : " save me, Charley !" I exclaimed, for again I was a child, and he my champion and protector. It was a final effort ; I was again sinking,

gasping for breath, but still conscious. And then I saw and heard no more till I opened my eyes, and found Lord Derwentwater kneeling beside me, my head resting on his shoulder, my brother chafing my hands, and Lucy Græme, more dead than alive, weeping beside me.

"Cheer up ; there's a brave girl," said my brother ; but I could not cheer up, I felt so weak.

"Have you your flask ?" said Lord Derwentwater : my brother shook his head.

"Here, Ringwood, run to the nearest cottage ; get whisky ; blankets—anything—but make haste," cried my brother.

Ringwood returned speedily, and after tasting the whisky, we managed to walk to the cottage, where we found a blazing fire, which did more to restore cheerfulness than aught else. So getting some garments dried, and the loan of others, we were soon equipped, and found that Lord Derwentwater had been harnessing a horse and cart to convey us home, which, I thank heaven, at last we reached in safety. My dear Grandmother's gratitude for our preservation may be imagined. She made us all pack off to bed instantly, and with her own hands made a posset for us, to keep out the cold. I was horrified to find that in his anxiety to procure a cart for us, he (Lord Derwentwater I mean) had not changed his clothes at the farm-house ; but he laughed at my fears, and said he felt so like a kelpie that water never harmed him.

I was soon in my bed, but I had disturbed dreams, and slept little till very late, for my mind was wearied

with all I had gone through, and conjured up painful combinations of the events of the last few days.

SEPTEMBER 16.—“The stormy clouds did roar again,
The raging seas did rout,
And my luvie and his bonnie ship
Turned widdershins about.”

These were the first words I heard on awaking to-day, and opening mine eyes I met those of dear Madge Murray.

“My little Martha,” she said ; throwing her arms round me.

“Madge, dear Madge !” I exclaimed ; returning her embrace.

“I got word of your adventure,” she said, “exaggerated, of course, but rest I could not till I had galloped over and seen you all ; and, thank heaven, you are all safe. I have been here the last two hours, chatting with dear Grannie ; and it is so late (past eleven), that I resolved to break your slumbers. I am going to take your place now, and shall be deep in the mysteries of soups and pasties ere I am ten minutes older ; so when you want me, you may seek for me in the still-room ;” and so saying she left the room.

I rose immediately, and hurried my toilet to make up the time I had lost. I found that Madge had done all, and more than I could have done ; and she and the cook were discussing the various dishes when I joined them.

We then proceeded to see that the chambers were properly prepared for our guests. As we passed the blue-room, Madge said :

"I must have one look at our hero, Lord Derwentwater; his son is out, so fear not to enter the enchanter's cave."

But I did fear, and hesitated till Madge, opening the door, showed me that the room was empty, and then I took courage and went in. We stood in silence a short space gazing at the picture.

"Master Charley had best allow none to enter his chamber, for they would be dull indeed if they did not perceive the likeness," said Madge. She then examined the picture more minutely, and exclaimed, "Ha ! this is newly done, is it not?" and, pointing to a carved part of the frame, she read these words :

*"Carolus Ratcliff, Comes Derwentwater
Decelatus, Die 8 Decembris, 1746."*

"Yes," I said, "I don't think it was there the other day : do you know what it means?"

"Too well," she replied : "it is part of the inscription that was on his coffin."

"And who has written it here?"

"Part is Richard's writing, the rest, I suppose, is his son's:"—and then, her dark eyes flashing while she looked at the picture, she added : "Fear not, the 8th of December is not forgotten ; a day of reckoning and vengeance may yet come for that and many another bloody deed ;—your son yet lives to avenge your murder."

I shuddered whilst she spoke, for the gipsy's prophecy flashed across my mind. "Oh, Madge," I said, "don't talk of vengeance; think to whom vengeance belongeth."

"And would you have Charles Ratcliff kiss the hand that slew his father?" she inquired.

"No, surely, but——. I know not what I wish—I think if peace——"

"Hush, it is enough to make the picture step out of its frame, to hear you name the possibility of peace between a Derwentwater and the Usurper."

"Death is a fearful thing, Madge."

"And shamed life a hateful——. Death fearful? Yes, to the coward and slave; to the brave, never! Did he think death a fearful thing?" she continued, looking at the picture, "No! Do not even our enemies say of him, 'That, dressed in scarlet faced with black velvet trimmed with gold, a gold laced waistcoat, and a white feather in his hat, he looked liker to a gay bridegroom going to meet his bride, so debonair was his demeanour, so gay and gallant his bearing, rather than a rebel traitor going to meet his just doom.' We, Martha,—we know, that a higher and a holier courage than the mere animal carelessness to danger or death sustained him in his last hour. Ours, Martha, was a high and holy cause, and of all the eighty who were murdered in cold blood for it, it is allowed that every one behaved with such firmness as gained the respect and admiration of all. To them, death was not a fearful thing; for could life compare to the proud glory of sealing with your heart's blood your devotion to your king and country? But whilst we are talking of dying, we forget that your guests are still living; and so come along, 'up stairs, and down stairs, and to my lady's

chamber:"—and so we quitted the room, I giving a last look to the picture as I left, the eyes of which seemed to follow me; and I sighed when I thought that visions of peace were not likely to visit the son's mind, whilst the picture of his murdered father was before him, seemingly ever watching him—perchance instigating him to revenge. We met Lord Derwentwater in the corridor: he inquired tenderly after my health. Madge questioned him where Harry was; he told her he had gone with Sir Richard to shoot partridges: had he been?—No, he had remained *at home* with Lady Lincluden, if he might presume so to term Mount Baliol, for it was many a long and weary year since he had known *a home* of his own. This speech set me a thinking. Years since he had known a home. Homeless, restless, wandering over the wide world,—how sad the history contained in these few words, "many a weary year since I have had a home of my own," and I had never fully appreciated the blessing of *a home*, till these few words revealed to me how much I had, in that respect alone, that others pined for. He took my hand, and, raising it to his lips, added: "And now I wish for a home, only that you might grace it." I know not what I might have said, but at that instant Sir Richard and Harry appeared at one end of the corridor looking for Madge; and when we entered the drawing-room, we found her there seated with Lucy Græme.

Harry was in great glee, he had hit every shot.

"And, Madge," he said, "only think, Madge, Cousin

Dick twice missed, and if I had had my own gun I am sure I could have done more, but the one I had tired me so: I wish I had my own; but I hit every shot, indeed I did."

Madge began to banter my brother on his gallant conduct the previous evening, in having saved us from drowning in the Kelpie's Pot, which, to her certain knowledge, she affirmed to be nigh *one fathom* deep.

"One, Madge," said my brother, "one! say six, and you will be nearer the mark. Why, I am one fathom deep myself, and I swear I never touched the bottom of it. Ask little Martha if she does not think, and did not *feel* it full fathoms five."

"Do not talk of it: I tremble yet when I think of the danger we were in," I replied.

"And if Miss Murray be so determined," said Lord D., "to rob us of the wreath of water-lilies, which, I suppose, is our guerdon, whence arose the anxiety about us which prompted her to ride across this morning to inquire after our lives, which, she avers, were in no danger?"

"You have me there," said Madge, laughing, and half aside; and then she said aloud, "my anxiety was to know whether you and Cousin Dick would have the assurance to make heroes of yourselves, for wading out of a pot six feet deep, and to see if he would actually attempt to impose on *me*, that he had done somewhat."

"I'll tell you, Madge—my dukedom to a beggarly denier—the Kelpie's Pot is twenty feet deep if an inch. Harry is well nigh one fathom; he shall wade across

with a hat on, and if the crown of the hat be not covered, aye, and something over, the best steed in my stable shall be yours: do you say done?"

In an instant Madge's expression altered; Harry appeared quite eager; but, with a face of dismay, she replied, "Heaven forfend!—no Harry, I have already cost you too dear;" and then, in her own gay tones, she replied, "I know the pot well, and it is over twenty feet deep: I was nearly in it myself some weeks ago. I had hooked a fish, if not auld kelpie himself, and thought I should have a splendid run; but if I was strong, it was stronger, and then I stumbled and fell, and, determined not to lose my rod, it was dragging both into the water, when luckily Harry came to my assistance, and held my rod, snap! went the top joint, and off went fish and line. Old Peg was passing at the time, and she consoled me by telling me that it was lucky I had lost my line, or the kelpie would have had me into the pot, and ne'er a ane ever thrived that was christened in the water o' his hame—don't look so dismayed, Lucy, Peg hinted that the doom only applies to those who, of their own free will, disturbed him under the translucent wave."

"Then we need have no fear," said Lord Derwent-water; "our visit to his serene kelpieship was not a voluntary one."

"For my part," said Madge, "I attribute your disaster to your conduct on Sunday;" and, in a snuffing voice, she continued, "my brethren, let us enlarge and improve on this matter, which is clearly a device of the

enemy, and shows the power he has over the prancing Popish prelacy, now unhappily stalking in the noonday, under the forms of Richard Baliol, called, by the profane, *Sir* Richard, Charles Edwardes, and Martha Bethune Baliol, spinster;—let us consider, firstly, that had they attended the comfortable, cordial condemnation of me, Habakkuk Howlingrace, this would not have taken place:—secondly, that that Moabitish young maiden, Madge Murray, was preserved from this danger in consequence of having been present on the last Sabbath in our tabernacle, when I wrestled for her.”

“Hush, Madge,” said my grandmother—“Hush, Madge, and respect the preacher for the sake of his calling.”

“Ah, Grannie, had I known that you were near, I had not thus laughed at your pet; but commend me, for I actually listened to him on Sunday. Knowing there would be no service in our church, I strayed to the kirk;” and then, in a snuffing tone, which we could not fail to allow resembled Mr. Mackenzie’s, she proceeded to give us what she termed “a screed o’ his doctrine.”

My Grandmother tried to look grave, but did not succeed very well, and we all laughed aloud.

“Oh, Madge, dawtie,” she said, “have dune, and come like a gude bairn, and eat your nuncheon, or bonny Lucy Græme will think that ye are clean dementit.”

We three girls were seated in the oriel room after luncheon, when Lucy began asking me some questions

I could ill answer about Lord Derwentwater ; but Madge came to my assistance, and told her he was a particular friend of *hers* (Madge), and that I could tell little about him. Lucy says they liked him much at the Knowe the two days he was there, he made himself so agreeable: he had brought letters from a cousin of theirs, Dr. Græme, who resides in Paris : but Dr. Græme had merely said, that he was a young Englishman, and not a word who he was.

" Oh," said Madge, " luckily *I* can tell you all about that. His father was a man, and his mother was a woman, and although Master Edwardes never boasts of his birth, I know for certain, he is descended from Adam. And yet, what matter *who* he is,—it is more consequence *what* he is. I am sorry I have not time to tell you that also, but there is a carriage driving up the approach, and so exit Madge Murray."

" We shall meet again to-morrow, dear Madge," I said.

" Indeed, I know not, and you will value me twice as much if you have some trouble in getting me."

" You are worth the trouble, dear Madge, and if I could obtain you I should not grudge it," said my brother, in a low voice.

" I knew not that you were there, coz.," she replied, blushing, " and indeed I dance so vilely that I shall ill repay your preference."

" Come along, Harry, we shall have a smart ride to escape that shower now coming over the hills;" and, not perceiving my brother's offered hand, she flung her

arm round Harry, and left the room, my brother accompanying them, whilst we proceeded to the landing-place to receive the guests, and presently he returned with the Murrays of Kilmaine. The family consists of Mrs. Murray, a son, and a daughter. The son is not good-looking, but agreeable, and of pleasant address: the daughter appears to me to be proud and stiff.

This has been a day of disappointments. The Drummonds cannot come, being detained in Edinburgh by the illness of their son. Then I had set my heart, on Sir Richard losing his, to pretty Lucy Græme, and opening the ball with her, and instead he has engaged Madge Murray, whose appearance is uncertain, and has vowed not to dance till she comes; and lo! his friend Kilmaine has secured the hand of Lucy, and appears as much struck by her beauty as I hoped my brother would be. She tells me that she has known Kilmaine some time, having met him at Carbrechan, and she says she believes he admires Mary Drummond. I do wonder if such *really* be her belief. Besides the Murrays, we have Lord George Wemyss, Sir A. Primrose, the Stirlings, and the Douglasses, and several more are expected to-morrow.

And to-morrow I shall be seventeen. How many changes will have occurred ere this day next year, and I must own that I long for some stirring scenes to vary the monotony of my quiet life.

SEPTEMBER 17.—My birthday! The sun shines brightly; I accept it as an omen of a happy year. Some one knocks. It was my dear brother Richard, who

came to be my first foot, and to present me with a handsome gold watch and *etxi* which he has got all the way from London for me, also a beautiful lace cap from Flanders: he had two, which he tells me he brought from foreign parts for me. I accepted one, but bid him keep the other for his wife:—he laughed, and said that ere she appears the fashion would be changed; and if I wished it not, I might present it to Madge or Lucy.

I shall give it Lucy; for Madge cares not for head-laces nor powder, but dresses in a fashion of her own, but not in *the* fashion. But now I must repair to my dear Grandmother.

CHAPTER V.

SEPTEMBER 18.—I wished for some stirring event to vary the quiet routine of my life—some incident to give interest to my DIARY. Truly I have had both. How much a day may bring forth, how little can we judge by the present hour what may happen the next ! Had any one told me, two days ago, that this morning I should be galloping over the country, ere break of day, I should have scouted such a wild idea. But let me return to yesterday, and tell all that befel me. I stopt my writing to go and see my grandmother, and never had I time to resume it : as yet the events are fresh in my memory, and whilst they are so I will note them down, commencing where I left off.

I proceeded to my grandmother's room ; she kissed me tenderly, and gave me her blessing, and hung round my neck a very magnificent jewelled necklace.

After remaining a short space with her, I proceeded to the garden, to tell the gardener to send some of his best fruit to breakfast. This is a French fashion, which my Lord Derwentwater has taught us, and which we do much affect. Whilst in the garden, my Lord Der-

wentwater joined me, and, kindly greeting me, wished me many happy years, and that during their course I would sometimes bestow a thought on my old playmate, Charley Ratcliff, who would never forget Mount Baliol, and the happy time spent there. He then acquainted me, that the proofs of his being heir to the title are too clear to be set aside; but that title is tainted, and he cannot bear it, nor even show himself openly in his native country, for his name is one of the exceptions to the pardon; and the Usurper's government is too needy to be able to forgive a man whose first act, on being pardoned, would be to dispute its right to endow hospitals with his fortune.

"In short, Miss Baliol, nought remains for me now but to return to France, and there, in the excitement of a soldier's life, to try and blot out the remembrance of the gleam of sunshine which, since I have known you, has shone upon my dark and solitary path. You I can never forget; but I must think of you now as one so immeasurably removed from me, that it were madness to attempt to annihilate the distance that separates us. I shall look on you as a guardian angel, to incite me to noble deeds, that you may never blush in after years to hear the name of the man that loves you." He was going away! Leaving Scotland to return no more!! I longed for the power to bid him remain; but speak I could not. I felt sick at heart, and must have fallen to the ground had not his arm supported me.

"I should not have remained to-day but at the urgent request of your brother; for, believe me, the longer I remain near you, the more I see of you, the harder will

be the effort to tear myself from you, the greater the misery when gone."

I know not exactly what I said, nor how it came to pass, but this I do know, and I thank heaven whilst I write it, that ere we left the garden, he had promised not to leave Scotland for some time longer, and I had promised that when he did so, I would accompany him as his wife! How my heart beats in writing these two words—*his wife*! Was ever any one more supremely happy! I cannot believe it, for never did one gain a truer or nobler heart.

He gave me a ring which the Prince had given him, and in exchange begged for the one I wore. It was a signet ring, an antique which my dear father used to wear. Hastily drawing it from my finger I put it on his.

"What is the subject?" he said, looking at it.

"Can you not decipher it. The eternity of love in the soul. Cupid holding a butterfly, and encircled by a serpent."

"That is not it. To me it looks like Hymen; but why the inverted torch?" he replied.

I started, and with dismay now remembered that yesterday I was playing with Madge's rings, and had taken one of hers as a pledge of her return, giving her my own one in exchange. They were so much alike that I had not remembered this when I gave it away, and alas! it was a mourning ring: the genius of life with folded wings and inverted torch, typifying death:—and this was the ring of our betrothal!

Soon after breakfast, the gentlemen departed to beat

the woods in search of game, and we ladies proceeded to divert ourselves after our own fancy. Lady Stirling accompanied my dear Grandmother to see some new improvements in the kitchen, and the young ladies began discussing the new modes, whether the short aprons were as becoming as the long, the reported marriages, and when they were going to Edinburgh, where I believe we all meet in winter. I must own I took little interest in the matter. I was too much occupied in thinking over the scene of the garden. I rejoiced when Miss Murray proposed that we should take a walk and see the garden: accordingly we got our hoods and capuchins, and proceeded there. I know I played my part badly, for I could not still the beatings of my heart when passing the spot where so lately I received the vows of Lord Derwentwater, and had in return plighted my own.

Lucy Græme could not assist me to amuse my guests, and I feel well assured they were getting very tired, when I saw Madge Murray coming along the pleached walk, and knew that she would aid me. I named her to my young friends, for, save Lucy, she knew none of them, and told her she must help me, and very soon she had them laughing, for she described so merrily that it was owing to an accident that had befallen her that morning, that she had come six hours sooner than she intended. She had just mounted her own chestnut to take a gallop to the gate, when lo! it put its foot on a stone, and down they both came.

"Then you acknowledge having been thrown?" said Miss Murray, with a sneer.

"Acknowledge having been thrown? Yes, fifty times at least. I would not ride a horse that could not throw me; but this time we both fell together, luckily I was uppermost; but I found my poor Bright Star had hurt her shoulder, and was not able for more to-day, so I had to take Harry's grey, and he is no arm-chair to sit, especially on a rough road; so instead of galloping across in time for the first dance with my Cousin Dick"—and here she gave a glance at Miss Murray—"I was obliged to bring Prince Rupert as quietly over as his excitable nature would permit. As we passed the Spring Well Muir, I met a party of sportsmen, and left Harry with Sir Richard, so I had the felicity of riding to the stable with our steeds; as I led Harry's——"

"And had you no groom?" said Miss Murray.

"To what purpose?—to pick up the pieces if I fall, and preserve the pattern? Harry will do that, and I had as lieve go in the family coach at once, with the coachman on the box, my own woman inside, two footmen behind, and a couple of outriders; all very fine, indeed, but most fearfully in the way. Suppose Harry and I make a wager who will first return to a given point, by each riding a circle?—what is the groom to do—race after me, fly after Harry, or remain stationary? But let me not forget to tell you Martha, the sport has been so good that Sir Richard begged of me to announce his speedy return, and his hope that after that, the ladies will permit them to accompany them in their walk."

They did soon return, and planned a walk to an old ruin at the end of our park. I was unable to go, having

household matters to arrange at home, but Madge promised to take my place, and tell them the legend connected with it, which she averred to know better than I did, and in truth I believe her, as she has a rare knack of collecting all the old legends of the country.

But my household affairs were little attended to, for I found that my Lord Derwentwater had also managed to escape the walking party under some pretence, and so we sat together in the *oriel* room, and talked of the happy future which is before us.

I must describe the dress I wore in the evening, for it was much commended. Instead of the rose-coloured taffetas which I had resolved to wear, my Grandmother had ordered me, from Mistress Ellis, a very rich white and silver brocaded satin, which was made in the newest fashion, looped up to show my petticoat, which was of pale blue satin. My trimmings and ruffles were the finest point—my hair was powdered, for as it has a *shade* of the Baliol red in it, powder is no small addition to the adornment of my toilet. My woman, Mistress Alice Lambskin, is the most skilful hairdresser that ever was, and truly, vanity apart, when she had finished her labours and put on my cap, and I had added my patches, I was not altogether unpleasing to behold. To-night, at least, I thought I shall not appear to such disadvantage by *his* side. But when Lucy Græme came to see me, alas, how poor was my appearance beside her radiant loveliness!—who that had eyes but must contrast the difference between that picture and this! She was attired in a plain white satin negligée, with cherry-coloured trimmings, and a petticoat

of peach blossom and gold brocade. She wore no powder, but her sunny brown curls were seen in all their beauty. Her neck and arms boasted of no adornment save that which nature had given them, whilst mine were sparkling in gems; for in addition to the necklace my Grandmother gave me, my uncle had presented me with bracelets to match. In one respect only were we alike—we both wore little Flanders lace caps, which my brother had presented to us. I could not raise my eyes from contemplating Lucy, she looked so lovely beyond expression; but whilst I regarded her in mute admiration, she spoke in high terms in praise of my appearance, and told Mistress Alice she might be proud of her skill, for never had she seen any one more becomingly attired—more fitted in every way to be queen of the ball. Whilst we were talking Madge entered; she shares my room, but had been busy with Harry, who occupies Alice's chamber, for Madge never will consent to be separated far from him. She complimented both, and vowed that we were armed with deadly intentions.

"Pray don't wait for me," she said, "if you wish to proceed to the scene of action, for I have yet to see that Harry's hair looks well when powdered—if not, he shan't wear it; but his heart is set upon powder, as Sir Richard wears his that way, and his valet is now with him."

Accordingly we did not wait, but proceeded to the drawing-room, where we found my Grandmother, Lord Derwentwater, and Sir Richard. Lady Lincluden and Sir Richard were loud in their praises of the be-

coming nature of our toilet. My Lord Derwentwater said nothing, but his eyes were eloquent, and in them I read that he did not regret or repent the choice he had made. And truly I had reason to be proud of his appearance, for scorning the fashion of the Usurper's court, he wore the dress that a gentleman appeared in, when the Stuarts were on the throne. Truly had a queen been his choice rather than a simple Scottish maiden, she would have derived honour from one on whom nature had lavished her choicest gifts, though fortune had proved less kind. He pointed out to me that he was in my colours, and then I first perceived that, by mere chance, the dresses of each were blue and white. He told us that at the ball he had lately been to at Versailles, he had been requested to wear an English costume, and therefore, out of compliment to the king (his cousin), he had chosen the dress worn during the reign of his Majesty's kinswoman, the beautiful Queen Henrietta.

My brother was in a court dress: Neither court nor costume are improved by the change. Although beside my Lord Derwentwater's dress, his looked stiff and formal, he himself bore well the comparison, and two handsomer men you would look for in vain. My Lord Derwentwater is dark as a foreigner, while my brother has the blue eyes, fair complexion, and sunny hair of the Scandinavian heroes, whom we boast as our ancestors on the Bethune side. Harry and Madge were the next to enter. I am glad to say that Harry did not wear powder; his own rich chestnut curls suited him much better.

Madge's dress, the most unstudied, was not the least becoming. It was of white lutestring, with bunches of flowers embroidered on it in their natural colours. The boddice had a very long peak, with a stomacher, and a partlet of fine lace; the petticoat was white, with rose-colour trimmings; and the ringlets of her black hair, in which she wore a white rose, her only ornament, fell on her snowy neck.

Harry's ecstasies at the sight of the brilliantly lighted hall and chalked floor were long and loud. The others then began to arrive, but so quickly did one follow another, that I had no longer time to note the dresses. Amongst others was Miss Peggie Paterson; and there being some dragoons quartered near, my brother had judged it best to ask them (he having been a king's soldier, as they unjustly term him). Accordingly some of the dragoons appeared, and one of them was Captain Buchanan: he was named to me, as indeed they all were. He is quite different from what I had expected; not in the least good-looking; but though a *sidier roy*, he has a soldierly port and presence, and although the son of a Glasgow weaver, he is not unlike a gentleman. My Grandmother shook hands with him, and congratulated him on having gained the heart of Peggie Paterson. He thanked her, and made some speech about being a willing captive.

The sets began to form, and I felt not a little nervous when Lord Derwentwater led me to the top of the room. I could not but hear the hum of admiration which greeted him as we walked along the room, and which did not diminish when they saw his dancing.

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We first walked a minuet. There were several couples besides ourselves. Sir Richard presented his hand to Madge to lead her forth, but she refused to dance this time, as she kindly said she wished to admire me. My dear brother seemed to be gratified by her speech, and pressed her no more. The Lady Lincluden begged of him then to secure the hand of Miss Murray. "No," he replied, "I do not dance, unless it be with Madge;" but seeing my Grandmother look distressed, he said, "I will please her yet more; I will get Gentle Geordie (my Lord George) for a partner to her, and he is the best dancer that I know;" and suiting the action to the word, he crossed to where Lord George stood, who presently after was seen leading out Miss Murray.

About the middle of the evening I was standing in the corridor, near the door of the small drawing-room, and concealed by the curtain which hung across the entrance, was witness of a scene which occasioned me much pain of heart, and which is yet unexplained. Madge Murray and Lord Derwentwater entered, and looking round to see that none were present save themselves, they sat down on the settle, and began talking very earnestly, in so low a tone of voice that I could not hear a word that either said, but I saw Madge take a letter from the folds of her bodice and present it to Lord Derwentwater. He took it eagerly; she made some remark, which I could but guess the nature of, for he coloured, and for a moment looked embarrassed, but speedily recovered; she gave him her hand, which he raised to his lips, and then Miss Murray and Captain Buchanan entered, and I, sick at heart with

all I had seen, turned away and walked down the corridor. Kilmaine met me, and told me they were forming a country dance, and he was looking for Miss Græme, who had been dancing with Harry Ashton. We entered the dancing-room, and at the door we met Madge and Harry.

"Miss Græme is talking to Lady Lincluden," said Madge to Kilmaine, who hurried away to find her. "Martha," she continued, "will you dance this time with Harry? But you are tired, you look so pale. Never mind dancing with Harry; I am sure you are tired."

"No," I replied, "I am quite able to dance."

"Then remember, Harry, go to the top of the dance beside my partner," and we entered the room. Lord Derwentwater offered Madge his hand, and we walked to the top of the room, but there we found Miss Murray and Captain Buchanan. They gave place to Harry and me only.

"I stand next my cousin, Miss Murray," said Madge.

"Pardon me, we were here first, and shall remain. You must stand below us," said Miss Murray.

"You flatter yourself too highly if you think an Ashton will ever yield to a Kilmaine," said Madge, proudly.

"Captain Buchanan, I hope you will maintain our post, and yield it to none," said Miss Murray.

He bowed, but looked disconcerted.

"What!" said Madge, "do you think one of Hawley's dragoons will stand his ground and a white rose so

near," and she pointed to one in her hair. "Remember Falkirk!"

"Bloodie Culloden remembered it well," he replied, haughtily.

"Captain Buchanan," said Lord Derwentwater, "my partner's place is next to her cousin: do you mean to give it?"

I know not what he might have done; I think he was inclined to yield, but at that moment, unfortunately, the white rose from Madge's hair fell at his feet.

"The white rose has yielded its place," said Miss Murray.

"Holloa Madge, there's your bonnie white rose at a *sidier* royl's feet," said Harry in the same breath.

"Never!" cried Lord Derwentwater and Madge impetuously. Lord Derwentwater picked it up, and presented it to her; and I could not help feeling a thrill of pleasure when I saw that he did *not* retain the flower.

"Nearer my heart than ever!" said Madge, sticking it in the boddice of her dress.

"Do you mean to give us our place?" said Lord Derwentwater.

"I yield my place to none," said Captain Buchanan; "and the white rose fell at my feet."

Lord Derwentwater looked as if he could have hurled him from the spot, and bit his lip to keep in the fierce reply which rose to it, but glancing at his sword he said, quietly, "Let us not forget that we are in the

presence of ladies, and must not disturb them with our quarrels."

"You may find that the white rose——" said Madge, and then she suddenly stopped.

"Your pardon, Miss Murray," said Captain Buchanan, bowing.

"The white rose had rather be the first in the battle than in the brangle; there, it will never give place to Hawley's dragoons. And now, Master Edwardes, shall we go see this dance from the other side? You are unfortunate in your tune, Captain Mungo Buchanan, it being 'Up and rin awa, Hawley,'" said Madge.

"No Madge," I said decidedly; "Captain Buchanan may rest assured that no such tune will be played whilst he is our guest."

Captain Buchanan bowed his thanks, and Lord Derwentwater smiled his approval of my speech, and the music beginning (it was "Off she goes"), Harry and I led down the dance, and Madge and Lord Derwentwater walked away. I was so distressed during the whole dance, thinking what would be the consequences of the scene, that great was my surprise to see Madge and the earl standing, talking as unconcernedly as if nothing unusual had occurred. As soon as the country dance was over, Harry and I crossed the room to where Madge stood.

"Oh Madge," said he, "what brave sport a ball is. Whom am I next to dance with?"

"What would you have more, you have danced

with the beauty, and the queen of the ball," replied Madge.

"But Martha is going away now, and I must have somebody. Come yourself Madge; I like you better than any one. Hurrah! a Highland reel. Come Madge, come," and he led her away, leaving me with Lord Derwentwater.

"Do you know," said he in a whisper, "that Miss Murray knows our secret?"

"Madge! How?" I exclaimed, thinking on the scene I had so lately seen in the small drawing-room.

"Why," he replied, smiling, "she saw your ring, or rather, I believe, her own, on my finger, and at once taxed me with the fact; and good sooth, mistress mine, I was too proud of having won you, too happy when she styled me cousin, to seek to deny what honours me so much. But I told her that she only, is in our confidence, and I know we may rely on her."

"How come you to know that so well?" I inquired, for all this did not explain about the letter.

"Because," he answered quietly, "I have known her tried in matters of life and death."

At that moment Captain Buchanan crossed near us. The look that he and my lord gave each other I shall never forget, but not a word was spoken by either.

I felt miserable, and longed for the ball to be at an end, that I might consult with my brother. At last supper was announced, and I was handed to it by Lord Derwentwater.

When it was over, we returned to the ball-room, and

changed partners no more, consequently the rest of the evening I was my lord's partner. On leaving the room it chanced that Lord Derwentwater, not perceiving that I was near, strode up to Captain Buchanan, and touching the hilt of his sword, said the single word, "*To-morrow?*"

"I shall be at your service," replied Captain Buchanan, and immediately they separated. But I had no opportunity of speaking with my brother.

After Alice had left me, Madge entered; she had been sitting with her brother, listening to his raptures about the ball till he fell asleep, and now she came to me.

"Martha," she said, smiling archly, "the next time you change rings with any one pray let it be your own ring, and not mine, that you give;" and then she flung her arms round me, and folding me to her heart, she congratulated me on the prospect before me.

"Tell me how you found it out, Madge?" I said.

"I guessed there was something when Lord Derwentwater was so anxious to know the weight of a very inferior stag, that he could not join the walking party, as I knew you were too busy. Eh, Mat, and when I saw my ring on his finger I was certain."

"And what were you saying to him in the small drawing-room?" I inquired.

"Where were you?" she said hastily.

"I was outside, and saw all."

"Saw all! All what?" said Madge.

"I saw you give him a letter, Madge."

"And what then? Surely you are not so foolish as to be unhappy because the man who is plighted to you

receives a letter from your cousin. I thank heaven, if I have a man's heart, as Miss Peggie says (would it were true in one sense), at least there is no room in it for the woman's failing, jealousy. Martha, it is unworthy of you, and most undeserved by Lord Derwentwater. My dear burdalane, you are incapable of appreciating the truth of his character if for one instant you allow a doubt of him to poison your mind. Yes, I did give him a letter, and what the contents of that letter were, I frankly tell you I shall not reveal; but if you are what I take you to be, you will at once crush the hideous image now rising in your heart, believe Lord Derwentwater to be all that you wish, and believe that Madge Murray would die sooner than harm you, and, with all her faults, is incapable of attempting to steal a heart given to you."

"I will believe it, Madge; come what may, I shall never again doubt either of you. It is too pleasant, in this case to obey, to wish to do otherwise," and I returned her caresses.

"But oh, Madge," I said, after a moment's pause, "this quarrel with Captain Buchanan. What is to be done?"

"Done! nothing. He will apologise, you may be sure. He could afford to bluster before us, knowing that Lord Derwentwater would not quarrel in the drawing-room; when alone there will be a difference."

"Ah Madge, would I could think so, but I fear that will not be," and then I told her the words that I had heard pass between them.

Madge smiled scornfully. "In that case I think there is every reason to expect a vacancy in Hawley's

dragoons. Fancy the impudence of the son of a weaver presuming to cross swords with Lord Derwentwater. Truly it will do him good to lose a little of that blood which makes him so malapert."

"Madge! Madge!" I said, in an agony of distress, "how can you talk thus lightly of such an awful thing!"

"Awful! Bless the child, does she fancy Charley Ratcliff never crossed a sword before now, and he with a beard on his chin—I crave your pardon, he wears mustachioes. Poor Peggie Paterson might term it an awful thing did she know all. Lord Derwentwater is scarce the man to forgive an insult offered in your presence. Why how now?" seeing me rising hastily. "What is the matter? Whither away?"

"Since you will not advise with me how this may be put an end to, I must go to those who will—my dear brother," I said.

"Stop one moment, and listen to me. If Lord Derwentwater has been insulted, he must punish the offender. Sir Richard will tell you that no gentleman can interfere to prevent a meeting."

"And so," I replied, bitterly, "Lord Derwentwater must be sacrificed to avenge a silly quarrel provoked by you."

"My dear Martha, I forgive you the unkindness of your speech, knowing that it has no foundation. I drew No. 2, consequently my place was second in the dance. Miss Murray took my place, and her partner supported her. I do not blame him, but she it was who provoked the quarrel, and so let Mungo look to

himself for supporting an unjust claim. Lord Derwentwater won't forget bloodie Culloden."

"Ah Madge," I replied, "you do not love him, or you could not thus talk of exposing him to danger:" and the tears, I could no longer restrain, ran down my cheeks.

"No," she said, laughing, "I do not; but even then—but dry your tears, Martha. You think Lord Derwentwater's life in danger. I do not: I don't think the same of Mungo's, but he provoked the attack."

"Madge, think how dreadful, if murder be the end of a silly quarrel between two girls for a place in a dance! If my brother cannot assist me I will go to my Grandmother. The sin of murder shall not be on his soul if I can prevent it."

"And how can my dear old Grannie help it?"

"At least she will try, since you will not."

"Will not! bless you, I have been arranging a plan this half hour. Now," she said, seriously—"are you willing to put a stop to this meeting?"

"Can you doubt it, Madge? only try me."

"I will. Captain Buchanan will be in no hurry to rise, he is too good a trooper to shame his commander in that respect, consequently the chances are, that the meeting does not take place till after breakfast. Ere then he may have received orders to mount and go; but to ensure that, it is necessary that you should assist me—are you willing?"

"Yes!" I replied, steadily.

"You must immediately ride across to the hall, and see my father."

"Oh Madge! I cannot do that."

"Then I cannot stop this meeting," she answered, determinedly.

"I must then try others."

"Do so, but they will fail, and it will then be too late to try this. No, Martha, believe me I know of no other plan. Sir Richard will not interfere. Your Grandmother cannot. This is the only way."

"But alone—at this hour?"

"Alone! no: Harry shall attend you, he knows every foot of the road, and when he is by your side you need have no fear—a better or a braver rider you won't find between this and the Solway."

"Could he not go alone?" No sooner had the words passed my lips than I wished them unsaid. Madge's tone of agony and distress, as she replied, I shall not soon forget.

"He! ah, would he could. How many miserable hours had I then been spared"——

"Or could you write?"

"No!" and smiling, she continued—"letters, as you know, are dangerous."

"Then there is nothing can be done?"

"Nothing—if you prefer risking the duel to riding across to the Hall." Madge never offered to go herself and although I felt inclined to suggest that plan to her, I did not like; it seemed so selfish to propose another to do what I feared.

"Then, Madge, I will go," I said, after a moment's pause.

"Ah! there speaks the Bethune blood: what says your watch, nearly two? but you have still two good hours ere it be time to start, so lie down and sleep."

"Sleep, Madge! impossible; how can you talk of such a thing?"

"Nevertheless, lie down: you will want rest; for you have a long ride before you. You must indeed, dear Martha;" and she forced me to obey her.

"Will you not come?" I said.

"No dear, I shall watch, and not let the time pass for starting."

I must have fallen asleep, impossible as it seemed, but it appeared as if I had just lain down when Madge by a kiss awoke me, told me it was almost four, and that I must rise. I had for a moment forgot about the duel, but the remembrance of it soon returned in all its bitterness.

"Now, whilst you dress, I must go and rouse Harry," said Madge; and I saw with delight that she also had on her riding dress, and I felt comforted at having her for my companion. Truly I had wronged her when I had thought she would spare herself when she could serve a friend. I heard her speaking to Harry. "Harry, you have not got your gun, and I want them to see how you can shoot: rise quickly, go over to the hall, get your gun, and hasten back, but say nothing here where you have been, they might laugh at a man who could only shoot with his own gun."

"Oh Madge!" he replied, "I have had such a dream——"

"Hush man! no dreams before breakfast—now quick! join me soon." Madge returned, and very soon Harry knocked to say he was ready. My room being on the ground floor, we easily got out, and hurried to the stable.

"But who will saddle our steeds?" I said.

"Oh, I can do that bravely, can't I, Madge?" said Harry.

"None better," she replied, kindly.

But when we came to the stable door we found the groom, who had come across the previous day with Madge's mails. One of our horses was sick, and he being a famous doctor had undertaken to cure it, and as the poor beast was really very ill, he had sat up with it all night. He told Madge this, and seemed to be in no ways surprised at seeing her so early.

"Saddle quickly, John, we are going to have a brisk ride, and see the sun rise."

With Harry's assistance the three horses were soon ready, and I, still trembling, was placed by him on my steed.

"Now Harry, show Martha that you know how to ride with a lady!"

"Never fear," said he, gaily; "keep at her right side, and half a neck behind, be the pace what it may."

"That's it—and, mind, no racing—take as great care of Martha as if she were a little child."

"Do you not accompany us?" I said, with surprise.

"Me! no. If I could have gone, do you think I would have sent you; but my bonnie grey has twice

your distance to put behind his feet. How lucky that the chestnut slipped; she never could have done it in the time. Now, listen attentively. Have no fear of the road. Harry knows every foot of it blindfold; but when you come to the Hall follow Harry up-stairs; he will go to the right; do you go straight on to a door that you will see at the end of the passage, and knock ere you enter. It is my father's study, and he is sure to be up ere you go to the Hall; but he dislikes being broken in upon, so I always knock. Tell him exactly all that has happened between Lord Derwentwater and Captain Buchanan. Trust me, he can help you, and will; but how, matters not; and tell him that I have ridden over to Dunsmuir; he will understand why, and then hasten back to breakfast."

"To Dunsmuir, Madge! that is sixteen miles from this; you never can ride so far alone!"

"Why not; are there bogies by the way?—but time is very precious—put me on, Harry."

The first thing the grey did when Madge mounted was to stand on its hind legs, pawing the air with its fore ones. Madge with a cut of her whip between the ears brought it down, only to lash out its hind ones, then finding that this did not unseat her, it darted off like the wind.

"There they go," said John; "there's not such a horse, nor another lady who would ride it, on this side the Tweed, whatever there is on the other."

Harry then mounted, and we proceeded rapidly by the old approach, where we soon overtook Madge and

her fiery steed, now on the best of terms, and quietly walking.

"Good luck go with you, Martha: don't forget my directions. If I have not returned by breakfast time, make the best excuse for me that you can; but it will go hard with me but I shall be back—good-by; our roads separate here."

CHAPTER VI.

"OUR roads separate here," said Madge, and in a moment she was gone.

In another, Harry and I were riding little less quickly along the level road which formed the first part of the way. By degrees it became more broken and rough, till we came to a part where it ceased altogether, or was merely a bridle path, leading to a sheep farm, which lay far up the hill where we had to cross. Harry had all this time maintained the precise distance which he said was the correct one, and as yet neither of us had spoken.

"Rein in now, and go gently—your horse does not know the way, and it is a gey kittle one," he said.

"Do you lead then," I cried, "and I will follow," which he did, and so we mounted the hill; the grey light of dawn increasing and showing us the road, enabled us to mend our pace. Yet Harry would on no account hurry the horses, as he said we should soon overtake the time lost here, when once again on the level road, and distress them less. In my impatience, I fear I would have made them go more quickly. At last we got to the top, and a more beautiful sight I never

beheld, for the sun rose in all its glory. The shades of night fled away, and the mist that hung over the river (which lay in the valley below us) slowly, like a gauze veil, curled up the hill on the other side of the clear and sparkling stream, whilst innumerable dew-drops, on every twig and blade, glittered like gems in the flood of sunlight, and the birds joined in the universal hymn of praise, which Nature was offering up. In spite of the desperate nature of my errand, I could not but pause a moment to drink in the beauty—the freshness of the scene.

“Is it not a brave sight?” said Harry.

“Beautiful indeed! have you ever seen it before?”

“Oh, yes, often—last week I wanted some fine muir game, and I am always sure of finding the best here, so we were up then. Madge and I have seen everything—but now keep a tight bridle-rein and follow me.”

We then commenced the descent, and so fearful was Harry of me, that he took twice the time I thought necessary, ere we were again on the level ground; but when there, he said, “Now give her her head, and never pull in till you come to the river. Hurrah! first there for a silver groat?”

“No racing, Harry,” I cried.

“True, Madge said none—well, lead the way,” and away we sprang. The river was quite low, and the ford easily crossed, and again we dashed onwards till we reached the home farm. The men were busy at their work, but our appearance excited no surprise, from which I was led to imagine that probably they took me for Madge. The Hall-door was open, and Harry hang-

ing his horse's bridle across a cleek put there on purpose, I suppose, returned in a moment with a servant, who stared at me—being the first who had paid me that compliment.

“ Hold the horses till I come back, I shan't be five minutes, cousin.”

“ Oh, but I must dismount—I have a message from Madge.”

“ Good, then ;” and he assisted me to alight, and then waiting no longer, and forgetting that I was a stranger at the Hall, he hurried on, leaving me to find my way as best I could ; I remembered Madge's directions and ran after him. He turned to the right as she said, whilst I proceeded along the passage to the door at the end. I thought I heard voices as I drew near, and for a moment my heart failed me. I had not seen my cousin for several years, and I felt anxious as to the reception I might receive from him ; but retreat was too late, so knocking at the door I awaited the permission to enter. It was given : and on entering I found my cousin alone. He was writing, and apparently had been up for a long time, if not all night ; for a lamp still burned, and its sickly flame contrasted strongly with the broad daylight in the passage. My cousin was sadly changed since I last saw him—his face looked careworn, and very pale, and his once dark hair was bleached as white as powder. The stoop of premature old age had diminished his height, which used to be so conspicuous. He scarce raised his eyes on my entrance, but took me for Madge, for he said quickly, “ Well, Madge, well ?”

"It is not Madge," I answered, "but Martha;" then he started up, and addressed me hastily:

"You, cousin—and at this hour—what has happened—is Madge ill, or Harry?"

"No, cousin—Harry is here—Madge has gone to Dunsmuir," and then, as briefly as I could, I told him my errand, my hope, that in some way he might be able to prevent the meeting I so much feared. He listened attentively, never once interrupting me, and when I had finished, he said, "and Madge told you to come to me?"

"Yes cousin, she said you could and would assist me—I should say us, in this difficulty."

"Madge judged well—at least I shall do my best. Return to Mount Baliol, fair cousin, and dread no evil. If the meeting has not taken place ere ten of the clock, it shall not after. Master Edwardes's life is too precious to be risked for a silly quarrel about a silly girl. Time presses for your return, and for me to fulfil my promise; therefore, fair cousin, pardon me that I play the uncourteous host, and hasten your departure, instead of beseeching you to remain."

He rose, and offering me his hand led me to the door, where we found Harry quietly waiting, his gun slung to his shoulder.

"Ah, papa," he cried, "I am going to shoot for a wager, and Madge says I shoot best with my own gun, so I came across the hill for it, and Martha came too—and now, boot and saddle, as Madge says, and off we go!"

"You say well, Harry; and see you take good care of your cousin, for she is precious to us all, though I

fear her reception here may not bear me out in saying so. Nay, do *you* hold her horse's head whilst *I* assist her to mount. Old as I am, that is a privilege I shall not readily yield;" and whilst settling the folds of my skirt, he, in a low and emphatic voice, charged me to mention to none his share in the matter, at least not for some time. It could do good to none, and might harm many. "Madge," he concluded by saying—"Madge evidently considers that you are fit to be trusted, else had she never sent you on such an errand to me; see that you merit the confidence we repose in you, and do not, like a silly girl, go prate of the matter to enhance the obligation (which, believe me, Master Edwardes will consider as none) of keeping him from risking his life for such a frivolous matter as his place in a dance. But his is a bold and daring race, and I like him the better for it. And now farewell, cousin; in future, I pray you, be not such a stranger at the Hall. God speed you." He waved his hand, I touched my horse, and away we rode.

At last we reached home. John was in attendance, and received our smoking steeds. "What must John think of our early ride?" I must have thought this aloud, for Harry replied:

"Good sooth, I know not, but I'll soon ask him. Hie, John, Miss Baliol wishes to know——"

"If Miss Murray be returned," I said, finishing hastily the question.

Harry forgot his former question, and eagerly pursued this one: "Oh aye, John, has Miss Murray come back?"

"Na, sir, I'm thinkin she's had farer to ride than ye hae, or she hadna been sae lang ahint ye."

"Well, she can't be long, for Prince Rupert will clear the ground with any horse that ever I saw," said Harry.

"Hark ! I hear her coming," I said.

"It's not Madge," said Harry, after a moment's pause ; "I'd know Prince Rupert's pace amongst a hundred. No, that's not him, I'm quite sure."

And true enough it was not he, yet it was Madge. She was mounted on a bay, which showed every trace of hard riding.

"You've beat me," were the first words she said when she saw us.

"And where's Prince Rupert?" said Harry.

"Quite safe, Hal, and will soon be in his own stall. Here, John, walk this horse for the next half hour, and as soon as he is rested, lead him quietly over the hill, and keep him there till I return. You can leave as soon as he is rested, and send across the Black Douglas for me when you get home. Now for breakfast ;" and, putting her arm in mine, we walked away.

"Madge, what must John think of this morning's excursions ?"

"Think ! Nothing ; or if he does at all, that it is lucky that, at the pace we have gone, none of the horses are hurt by it."

"But will he not talk of it to others ?"

"Not if he value his future residence at the Hall. His business is to groom our horses, and not to prate of our concerns. Besides, the man is so used to it. Many a

time Harry and I pass half the night galloping over the country; don't we, Hal?"

"Aye, Madge, and brave sport it is. But look ye, I have my gun."

As soon as we got to my room Madge said to me, "I see, by your face, that you have sped well on your errand. Now tell me all."

I did so, and then asked her success.

"I succeeded well also," she said. "I went at a mad pace, for I was nervous about you. I knew Harry would take care of you, but the road is rough, and the light was so bad, so I tore along, to prevent the possibility of turning back and going with you; consequently poor Prince Rupert was so warm, that I thought it best, on arriving at Dunsmuir, to get another, and told them to send mine home two hours after I left. Hark! there is ten. How few will think, when they see us at breakfast, that we have been half over the country this morning, whilst they were in the land of dreams. I wonder if any of their dreams have been more improbable than our actions!"

We proceeded to the breakfast room, but there were few there; Lord Derwentwater and my brother, but not Captain Buchanan.

"You see, Martha, I was right; he is a laggard," said Madge, aside to me.

One or two came dropping in, and then Captain Buchanan. He went up immediately to Madge, and said:

"Miss Murray, I must apologise for taking your place in the dance last night——"

"No apology is necessary from you, Captain Buchanan," said Madge, politely, but in astonishment. "It was your duty to stand where Miss Murray wished."

Then was Madge right; this man was a coward, and our labour had been in vain. "Love's labour lost," truly.

Lord Derwentwater then advanced quite friendly to Captain Buchanan, and said: "In fact, I think we were all in the wrong, and that we had best let the matter rest for ever. Do you not agree with me, Miss Murray?"

"Oh, certainly," said Madge, in a careless tone.

"And now to breakfast with what appetite we may," said Lord Derwentwater.

"A veritable dragoon of General Hawley's," whispered Madge.

"Pardon me," Lord Derwentwater replied, in the same low tone; "pardon me, had there been many such, Falkirk might have ended differently for us."

"This is then a ruse to mislead us," she whispered to me.

We sat down to breakfast, and were busy discussing the various dishes on the table, when a servant entered, and presented a letter to Captain Buchanan, saying, "The orderly said it was immediate, sir." Captain Buchanan asked permission to open it. I was so placed that I could see that his face, whilst reading it, expressed great annoyance. He rose, and went to my brother.

"Sir Richard," he said, "I regret particularly that I cannot accept of your hospitality for to-day, but this

join your entreaties to mine, in persuading our friends not to leave us."

This was "pressed day," so, after a proper resistance, they agreed to remain; all save Madge, who declared that she must go to the Hall, but, if possible, she would return ere the evening, as we were then to have a dance; and Harry said he did love dancing so dearly, that Madge declared, hap what might, she would return. And so she did, and brought with her the news that the sudden call for the dragoons, was in consequence of some apprehended row with the miners near Dunsmuir, but that the sight of them had quelled all such intentions of the miners, had they ever existed. "But," added Madge—looking at Miss Peggie, whom my Grandmother had insisted on keeping—"but, ladies, you may 'stand at ease' about the gallant dragoons; they are uninjured in life and limb, and have had no harder duty yet to perform than sit and look frae them."

Soon after Madge's departure my brother asked us if we would go to the paddock, where the gentlemen were, and award a prize to the best shot. I was very willing to do so, but some of our guests, and Lucy Græme, declared they were too great cowards to do anything of the sort, for they were terrified at the sight of a gun. Miss Murray and Jane Douglas were very anxious, and kind Lady Stirling, seeing our anxiety, vowed that there was nothing that she more delighted in than good shooting, and that she would be of the party. Accordingly Miss Murray, Jane Douglas, and I, accompanied her.

My brother gave a small silver bugle-horn as prize, and of course he tried not for it himself. I was glad, for Madge's sake, that Harry was the winner. I hung it round his neck by the silver chain attached to it, and nothing could exceed his delight, poor boy. He put it to his lips, and sounded a *mort* with great precision. "Won't Madge be proud?" he said to me.

"Are you to have no chance?" inquired Miss Murray of my brother.

"I should have none against Harry," he said, kindly.

"Suppose you try; and I will bestow this on the victor;" and she took a rose from her nosegay.

"For such a prize I shall do my best," he replied, bowing. "Gentlemen, Miss Murray gives a rose to the best shot. Now, Harry, look to your laurels; this is worth winning."

"Nay, I meant not that," said Miss Murray, looking annoyed; "I meant it but as a match between you two."

"I dared not be so selfish as to prevent others trying for such a guerdon," he replied. "Now, Harry, do your best."

"Never fear," said Harry; "the bonnie rose will be mine, and Madge shall choose between it and the bugle-horn."

"Fie man; Miss Murray will hold you to be a discourteous knight if you give away a flower she has worn. Win it, and wear it," said Sir Richard.

And Harry did win it. My brother led him up to Miss Murray to receive the prize she had promised, and which she bestowed with a very bad grace; but luckily

he saw it not. Still more fortunately, Madge was not present to resent it.

"How much rather Ellen would have given the prize to another," whispered Jane Douglas to me, as we went away, Lord Derwentwater, Lord George Wemyss, Sir A. Primrose, and Kilmaine, accompanying us, whilst the others announced that, having their guns, they would beat the woods for blackcocks.

Certainly Jane Douglas is a very strange girl. She accompanied me, uninvited, to my room, and sitting down, began the following conversation. I shall watch this evening, and see if her words are true.

"Such a game of cross purposes as every one here is playing!"

"How do you mean?" I inquired, in amazement.

"Lookers-on see most of the game, and your words prove it. First, my Aunt Murray is dying to see Ellen Lady Primrose. Ellen would rather be Lady something else. You know whom I mean."

"Indeed I do not."

"What! do you not see that she would rather dance with Sir Richard than listen to Sir Archibald. She gave the rose to-day, expecting your brother to gain it; so it was doubly hard that that unfortunate Harry Murray had the luck to do it, for I can see that Sir Richard would not give Madge Murray's little finger for the whole of my pretty cousin. Surely you see that!"

"Richard care for Madge! No, indeed; you are mistaken there, I am sure. We are all very intimate with her, but nothing more," I replied.

"Very well, I rejoice to hear that I am mistaken. So much the better for Nelly."

"Besides, Miss Murray scarcely knows my brother; she cannot care for a person she has so seldom met, and who has not paid her more marked attention. Confess that. Could she?"

"Oh, they have met pretty often before this; and then the old song says:

"Oh, love will enter in, whaur it daurna weel be seen."

"Confess, now, you are saying all this to amuse me," I said.

"Then I suppose you don't see that James Kilmaine can't take his eyes off Lucy Græme?"

"I do allow that admiration."

"Oh, that's an attachment, if ever there was one. He is in despair, his mother having set her heart on having another daughter-in-law;" and here she looked so fixedly at me, that I felt my cheeks and brow colouring beneath her gaze.

"My aunt's heart is set on another, and his evidently on Lucy Græme."

"But I thought he admired Mary Drummond," I said.

"Oh, no!" she answered; "they are good friends, but nothing more, I am sure. It was at Carbrechan he first met Lucy, and we all observed he noticed no one else."

"I do not wonder; he could see none more lovely."

"For that matter, I admire his own sister far more."

"Not so do I; she has a fine face, but a want of ex-

says: 'There's my thumb, I'll ne'er beguile you;' so say Harry and I." Madge held out her hand to my brother, but never raised her eyes to his whilst speaking to him.

"And is this all the answer you will give me, Madge?" he said, sorrowfully.

"I can give you none else. Don't you see the dance waits us:" she hastened away with Harry, whilst my brother remained leaning against the wall, and following her with his eyes.

No one seemed inclined for dancing, so we retired rather early. And here I am seated in my own room writing, and yet have had no opportunity to tell my Grandmother of my engagement. Madge, as usual, remained some time with Harry, but has now gone to bed, to recover the fatigue, not of her long ride, she tells me, but of dancing twice with gentle Geordie, who did not speak two words of either wit or sense all the time, but drawled out an account of the newest fashions. "He wished, ah—to know, ah—if I liked the periwigs, ah—or the powdered hair best: he wears a periwig, so I told him I preferred the other, for I thought an empty barn needed no thatch, which he vowed, ah—was very true, ah—but, *apropos*, to what, ah—so, Martha, don't say a word to me, but good night, for I shall be asleep ere you have time to assure me that gentle Geordie is an exceedingly prettily-behaved young man." So Madge said no more, and I have been busy writing ever since. Yet, I noticed when I raised my eyes this moment that she was still awake. I wished to talk with her of my morning ride, but, as if she guessed my inten-

hesitated, for I dislike giving him his assumed name and setting aside his own noble one of Derwentwater, and by it I ever think of him.

"To Edwardes? Yes, so she thinks; wondering, I doubt not, at the taste which prefers the dark brows of the one to the sunny smile of the other." This was rather a homethrust, but I held my peace.

"And does Miss Murray acknowledge her admiration of my brother? for, but for that, I should doubt the whole matter."

"Nell acknowledge it! Nell own such a thing! She would die sooner; but, unfortunately, she cannot conceal it—from me, at least."

"Then, does it not appear to you that I am almost the last person that she would wish to know it?"

"Perhaps so; but I thought you would tell me if there really is an engagement between Sir Richard and your cousin. I would let Ellen know the truth, and trust to her pride soon curing, or at least concealing the evil."

"If that be your reason, I can easily assure you there is no engagement. My brother has no secrets from me, so I am quite certain; and, indeed, I may say no affection, save such as is natural between cousins; and she, being one of my dearest friends, he meets her so frequently here, that he looks upon her as a sister more than aught else, I am sure."

"I rejoice, for Ellen's sake, to hear this. I cannot endure the idea of any one being indifferent to her," said Jane, eagerly.

"But do you not think that you would show your

affection for her more by concealing this weakness, rather than proclaiming it to me. Suppose, now, that I told my brother !”

“ Oh !” she answered, hastily ; “ oh, you never could be so cruel—so cruel to me, to her, to your own sex. I won’t leave you till you promise me never to mention to any one what I have just been saying—my own idle fancies.”

“ You may be at rest—I shall not mention the matter to my brother ;” and here Alice knocked, and put an end to our conversation by requesting of me to go and wait on my Grandmother. I have mentioned the matter to my Lord Derwentwater, and we laughed merrily together at the interrupted *tête-à-tête* ; and I told him that I also had seen it—he said nought in regard to the letter, and I was equally discreet. He affirms that he is too much occupied with his own affairs to have noted any of Miss Douglas’s wonders, and he says that I would best allow all parties the freedom of choice. But still I wonder if there can be any truth in my brother’s admiration for Madge—good sooth, I think not ; and I am certain that she cares not for him : but if he does, then adieu to my hope of having pretty Lucy Graeme as sister, for he is one not to be lightly moved or changed—indeed, in that respect we are alike ; and although I have had but little experience, I cannot but feel that my attachment to Lord Derwentwater is for life.

To-night I wore my rose-coloured taffetas made with a negligée, which some think to the full as becoming as the hoop. Lucy was dressed in a blue lutestring ;

Madge in a green brocade with scarlet stockings, which both my Lord D. and my brother assure me are the newest mode, and truly they showed off well the beauty of Madge's foot and ankle.

Feeling tired with my long ride, I danced but little, so I had time to look at the others. Kilmaine's admiration of Lucy was sufficiently evident to all, but she merely received it, and appeared in no way to return it. My brother danced but once with Miss Murray, and to me it appeared she received with pleasure the attention of Lord George Wemyss and Sir Archibald Primrose. One incident I remarked which occurred between my brother and Madge:—Lord Derwentwater was seated beside me, whilst Madge and Sir Richard stood at a little distance from us—so near that we could hear their conversation, yet too far apart to be one group. Harry came up to Madge—he had *the* rose in the button-hole of his coat.

"See, Madge!" he cried, joyously, "see, I have the rose yet; but I had far rather show my bugle-horn, for of the two it's the bonnier die."

"Ah, but you must guard the rose well, Harry: draw if any one attempts to take it. Cousin Dick would give the best thing he has for it—would you not, cousin?" said Madge, laughing.

"*You* know I would not," replied Sir Richard, quietly.

"Since Miss Murray's rose is so highly prized, I mean to put up, not throw down, my glove, to-morrow, and he who wins it may wear it," said Madge.

"If what the glove contains were added, I'd willingly

give all I possess to call it mine," said my brother, emphatically.

I looked at Madge—a brilliant blush rose to her cheek, but she answered, carelessly, "Oh, you mean my fan," holding it up—"you mean my fan—you shall have it at a much less price than the bonny *holms* of *Batol's Grip*."

"You wilfully misunderstand me; you know I do not mean the fan, but the *hand* which holds it," said he, earnestly.

CHAPTER VII.

BUT yet Madge did not or would not understand him.

"My hand, cousin, is a very useless one: it has neither the beauty of a woman's nor the weight of a man's. Come here, Harry; tell your cousin Dick that—that"—and here, for a moment, Madge's voice failed her.

"What am I to tell him, Madge?" said Harry.

"That my hand is yours this dance, and that you won't allow me to give it away. Nevertheless, dear cousin, in token of friendship, since our treaty seems to be such a solemn one, I'll give it you."

"I see you are determined not to understand me, but I, at least, am serious," said Sir Richard.

"And so am I, by this hand; and whenever it can be of use to you fail not to let me know, and if mine be too weak to add strength to your cause count on Harry's, and he will be true as steel: won't you, Harry?"

"Aye, to the backbone, Madge; to cousin Dick or you."

"And there begins the music. Cousin, the old song

says: 'There's my thumb, I'll ne'er beguile you;' so say Harry and I." Madge held out her hand to my brother, but never raised her eyes to his whilst speaking to him.

"And is this all the answer you will give me, Madge?" he said, sorrowfully.

"I can give you none else. Don't you see the dance waits us:" she hastened away with Harry, whilst my brother remained leaning against the wall, and following her with his eyes.

No one seemed inclined for dancing, so we retired rather early. And here I am seated in my own room writing, and yet have had no opportunity to tell my Grandmother of my engagement. Madge, as usual, remained some time with Harry, but has now gone to bed, to recover the fatigue, not of her long ride, she tells me, but of dancing twice with gentle Geordie, who did not speak two words of either wit or sense all the time, but drawled out an account of the newest fashions. "He wished, ah—to know, ah—if I liked the periwigs, ah—or the powdered hair best: he wears a periwig, so I told him I preferred the other, for I thought an empty barn needed no thatch, which he vowed, ah—was very true, ah—but, *apropos*, to what, ah—so, Martha, don't say a word to me, but good night, for I shall be asleep ere you have time to assure me that gentle Geordie is an exceedingly prettily-behaved young man." So Madge said no more, and I have been busy writing ever since. Yet, I noticed when I raised my eyes this moment that she was still awake. I wished to talk with her of my morning ride, but, as if she guessed my inten-

tion, and wished to hear no more, she shut her eyes in the most determined manner; and to my oft-repeated address, "Madge! are you awake—just answer this:" she has returned no answer, and so I shall follow her example, and retire. To-morrow we are once more the *partie quarrée*: to-morrow, my Grandmother and brother will be told of my engagement. I cannot believe that they can disapprove: yet I am anxious till I have got their consent.

"September 19.—6! in the morning.

"MY DEAR COUSIN,—I take up your pen (which is an ill one) to inform you, that when you are reading this I shall be seated at home! but I am sure I could not survive another attack of gentle Geordie's fashions, so my only safety is in flight. Tell my dear Grannie that Harry and I have been so happy that we regret that your birthday comes but once a year, and that I must hasten home, as the oldest inhabitant does not recollect my absence from the Hall for such a long time as two days and two nights. And you, dear cousin, as you have once crossed the hill, must return and pay back a few of my numerous visits. I shall certainly not appear here again till you have been at the Hall. So don't expect me, and therefore our meeting soon depends on you.

"I remain, your loving cousin to command,

"MADGE HOME MURRAY.

"I spare you the plague of being awake out of happy dreams to say good-by, so with a kiss I seal this.

"M. H. M."

I found, on opening my eyes, this letter written by Madge, which explained the reason I found not her in my room. Great was the astonishment, when I was asked at breakfast where Madge was, to hear that she had gone. Every one made some remark about her early ride. One asked the reason: another said it was a hint to them, and so, immediately after breakfast, the party began to break up. Many were the polite speeches made; loud was the expression of hope that we were all to meet in Edinburgh in winter, and thankful was I when the last of them had departed. No sooner were they gone, and order restored, than I hastened to acquaint my dear Grandmother with my engagement. She is quite satisfied with my choice. She says that when mere children our parents planned that thus it should be, and she will never hesitate in giving me to Lord Derwentwater, although he may not possess the lands which ought to be his: with tears in her eyes the dear old lady added: "I maun loe ye well, Charley, when I so readily trust ye wi my youngest and dearest treasure. But yet, my dear bairns, ye are owre young; have patience yet a little."

Ah, dear Grandmother! I thought, are we too young for happiness? True, I have little experience, but for his sake I would soon acquire it; and life is so short, and we would be so happy together. I said not this, however, but quietly listened to her, though her words were a death-blow to my happiness. But my lord would not hear of waiting; he was old enough, he said, to be able to judge what was for his own happiness; steady enough, he hoped, to be trusted with me,

and nothing should induce him to leave Scotland without me ; and then that recalled to us that

"Fatherless and mitherless,
Without ha or hame,
He maun wander through bonnie Scotland
And bide a traitor's blame."

And my Grandmother asked him—what I had never thought of doing, for my home was wherever he might be—what he meant to do with regard to obtaining a pardon?

"Nothing !" he replied. "I shall ask no favour from one I shall never own as king."

"We maun wait till Richard comes, and hear what a wiser head than mine, and a cooler than yours, dear Charley, thinks best. And my son Bernard, we maun consult him."

"Ah, dear lady ! why consult any one ? Let Martha be judge of what is most for her own happiness. If she thinks we ought to wait, I will agree, unwillingly, to do so ; but let me entreat of you, by the memory of your own youth, that you will not ask us to abide by the counsel of an uncle, who cannot feel as we do ; do not condemn us to waste the best part of our life, the bright days of our youth, in a cruel separation. Youth never returns. Dear lady, let us spend ours together."

"My dear Charley, I cannot promise ; but if Martha be worth winning, she is worth waiting for."

"Then let her be the judge. Martha, I have little to offer you but an undivided heart, an unsoiled hand. Years may improve neither. If you will accompany me—for I seek not to deceive you, I cannot remain in Scotland—if you will accompany me, may our Lady

desert me in my hour of need, if I ever give you cause to repent having done so. I release you from your promise, if you should so wish, but if you will share my exile, so help me heaven, I will try, as much as man may do, to make up to you for the home and country you quit for my sake."

And I—what could I say? but that I was for ever his, and would go with him to the ends of the world. And my Grandmother, seeing that my mind was made up to follow him wherever he might go, gave us her blessing, and promised that, if my brother and uncle saw no insuperable objection to our union, she would in no manner stand in the way of it.

My brother had gone out immediately when our guests left us, so we awaited his return some time.

How great his astonishment was, I cannot express. He told Lord Derwentwater that he ever looked upon me as his little sister, as a mere child in fact (there is a difference of ten good years in our age), and consequently his lordship had several times to repeat the matter to him ere he could believe that he was serious, and even then he vowed that he never was more amazed in his life; but as to my leaving the country, that was a matter not to be thought of, and so all my fears again returned. But he loves me tenderly, this dear brother of mine, and when he saw the anguish his words caused me, he altered his decision, and said:

"My uncle Bernard is now absent from Lincluden. Wait but a few weeks his return, and then we shall see what can be done. I ought to have some influence at court; let me use it, my dear lord, in your favour."

"I thank you, kind Sir Richard, but that may not be; from the Elector of Hanover I accept of no favour, and such he would consider the permission to breathe the air of England. There are but two things I cannot sacrifice to your sister—my faith, and my honour; and my honour would ever be tarnished did I accept aught from the hand red with the blood of a father and uncle. My name, though proscribed in this country, is in such estimation in others, that I need not hesitate to ask any one to bear it. My rank there is such, that I do not lower your sister's position. Here I am an attainted peer, an outlawed rebel; there I am Lord Derwentwater, colonel of a regiment of cuirassiers. On my return to France, my native country, I entered the service of its King, and was absent from Paris when the Prince, my master, left it in '48. I then wished to resign my commission, and to be one of his suite, but he requested of me still to retain it, assured me that I could thus best serve his cause—that I was more fitted for a soldier's life than one of diplomacy. From you I wish not to conceal it, that he it was who warned me of the attempt about to be made by my kinsman to gain my coronet, and by his counsel and advice I came to Britain. My kinsman's claim is for ever at an end. Nothing more remains for me here, and therefore I return to the country which received and sheltered me, when the land of my fathers cast me forth, a proscribed fugitive at sixteen, to seek my bread in another. If your sister accompany me, she shall herself choose the locale of our future home, whether at the court of Louis, where my countess will be received as befitting

her rank ; or, should she prefer it, in the province of Normandy, where I have a property, purchased by Lord Newborough for my mother, small, it is true, but I think your sister could be happy there ; but that she shall decide. I shall be but too happy if, by anticipating her wishes, I can compensate for the home and country she must quit for me, for I am sure that you and Lady Bethune are not so wedded to this country but that we may hope to see you frequent guests in our future home, wherever it may be."

Lord Derwentwater clasped my hand as he spoke, and I felt how cheerfully I could accompany him to the wilds of America, much more to the court of Louis.

"I shall say no more," said my brother. "My wish is to secure the happiness of my dear sister, and when my uncle returns we shall then settle how we may best do that. Meanwhile, dear Derwentwater, you remain with us, a dear and honoured guest, and come what may, none shall ever be so welcome as brother as you will."

And so ended the interview ; but let my uncle settle what he may, I am resolute. My own dear brother and beloved Grandmother approve of my choice, and come what may, nothing shall separate me from Lord Derwentwater.

In the evening, my brother asked me what had made Madge leave so hurriedly. I told him it was her dread of his friend, gentle Geordie, whereat he laughed, and vowed that he was enough to weary any one, save Miss Murray, who appeared to find something in him, whereas he, and all his friends thought that the brilliant binding

of the book was its sole merit, for within it there was not one word of either wit or sense.

In the evening we asked Lord Derwentwater to sing to us, and, amongst other songs, he gave us that exquisite little piece of Waller's:

"It is not that I love you less
Than when before your feet I lay."

When I retired to my room I could not but sit and ponder over the occurrences of the last three days. First and dearest, my engagement with Lord Derwentwater; next, my morning ride; and now, the prospect of so soon leaving my home and country, my probable residence at a foreign court; I who for years have not quitted Mount Baliol, and now, perhaps, in a few weeks I may be in a foreign land, far away from all I have ever known. But one thing would be more sad—were I to remain at Mount Baliol, and my dear Charles to return to France without me. But I will not even think of anything so terrible, such a blow to all my day dreams.

SEPTEMBER 20TH.—My Grandmother, Sir Richard, and I, drove to church. Charles (by his request I call him so), Charles rode across early to Carbrechan. Neither Madge nor Harry appeared, as I thought they might have done, till hearing that Mr. Erskine was to have prayers to-day at Kingsford, I remembered they would be there, as it is several miles nearer the Hall than our village.

By my Grandmother's advice, I am to mention to none my engagement with Charles, till such time as my uncle has heard of it. I readily agreed to do this, but

told her that Madge already knows it, but of her she has no fear—"for though Madge," she said, "be a scatter-brained, daft lassie, in some respects, in others she has wit enough. She knows full well that Derwent-water is not here without danger, and she also knows that few wad trow that Martha Baliol had been wooed and won by a Mr. Edwardes, and that folks wad be anxious to know somewhat more of one whom monie will envy."

SEPTEMBER 24TH.—This day, being fine my brother proposed that we should ride, as it is some time since we have done so. I agreed readily, and before noon we started. When we got to the end of the approach, Sir Richard asked me when I had last heard from Madge. I told him not since the morning she had left us: he said he feared she might be ill, and that it would be polite to ride across the hill and inquire for her. Would I go? I willingly agreed, and told them of the letter which she left behind her, in which she said she would not appear at the Mount till such time as I went to the Hall to fetch her. As we rode across the hill I thought of my morning ride with Harry, which, remembering my kinsman's injunctions, "that harm might come to many and good could come to none," I have never alluded to, not even to Charles, from whom I have no other secret. If in the morning light, when uncertain of his fate, the scene struck me as one of rare beauty, now in the full blaze of a meridian sun, and him by my side, it had lost none of his attractions. True the freshness of morning was gone, but the glory of noon now rested on it. Instead of approaching by the home farm,

as Harry and I had done, my brother led the way to the Lodge, and then the decay began to appear. The gate was half open, and hung broken on its hinges. No one was to be seen at the Lodge, which had a ruinous and deserted look. The avenue also had the desolate look which is given by grass growing on the gravel, which ought to be so trim, and weeds choking the flowers of the parterre on each side. The grass edging was rough and uncut. The trees had their stems covered with the grey lichen, which speaks of neglect and decay. There were some sheep grazing on the rough lawn, under the care of a wild-looking boy. When he saw us, he cried out to us: "Ye needna gang to the Ha' door: there they are playing quoits in the paddock," jerking his head to a side, indicating in which direction they were, and looking there, we saw Madge and Harry engaged at a game of quoits. The paddock was separated from the approach by a sunk fence, with a wide ditch on the other side of it. Sir Richard gave Soldan a touch with the spur; he sprang forward, and, clearing the fence, alighted on the other side, and in a moment they were by my cousin's side.

"Yoicks ! tally-ho !" shouted my cousin Harry, when my brother took the leap. "Bravely done, cousin ; ah, good old horse," caressing Soldan. "Come along, Martha ; don't be nervous: you will easily clear that," and he came running up to near where we were.

"Do not attempt it," said Charles to me. "It is wider and deeper than it looks."

"Come along !" cried Harry. "Halloa ! master, are you craning at a fence like that," he added, seeing

that Charles made no attempt to follow my brother, but had jumped off his horse to assist me to dismount. No sooner had he done that, than he mounted again, leaped across to where Harry was standing, made his horse make a demivolt, and in another instant was again beside me.

"Well done," cried Harry; "well done—that's a stiff leap, and without a race not an easy matter to get a horse to go at it, for it rises so much. I see you can ride."

"I think I ought," he replied gaily, and giving his horse to the groom who held mine, he assisted me over the fence, and we were soon beside Madge, who was patting Soldan, who arched his neck, and rubbed his nose against her in token of being pleased with her attention.

"Welcome to the Hall, cousin and playmate," she said to us; "you have arrived in time to see the conclusion of a grand match at quoits betwixt Harry and me. Sir Richard, will you trust a boy to lead Soldan to the stable, or will you take him there yourself, and return to us?"

"I shall remain," he replied.

"Here, Jack," and raising a small whistle to her lips she sounded it, till a boy appeared, and giving him directions to lead the horse very carefully, she resumed the game. She had hitherto been gaining, but now luck deserted her; her quoit fell wide of the mark, and Harry was soon declared to be the victor, and then she proposed that we should go to the Hall.

"I fear my father is not at home, so you must par-

don us if, in our ignorance, we neglect the duties of hospitality; but visitors are indeed strangers to the Hall."

We walked to the Hall, which we entered from the front. The previous time I had entered by the side-entrance. All along the same sad traces of neglect and decay appeared; not so much the want of riches, as the want of care, to repair the effects of time. The furniture was old, but had been very handsome, and was well arranged, and scrupulously clean.

"We don't sit in the withdrawing-room," said Madge, as she entered the passage, at the end of which was the door I remembered so well. "Harry's den and mine is here," turning to the right, as he had done "and here at least you will find a fire; as for a chair to sit upon, it is a long time since we have been able to boast of such a luxury. Eh, Hal?" and opening a door, we followed her into a room, the walls of which were hung around with arms. Here was Harry's fowling-piece, there Madge's bow; above the chimney-piece there was a clever sketch of Harry with his pointers; on each side hung pipes and pistols. On the wall opposite hung the picture of Prince Rupert (the horse), and Harry feeding him; and below a small miniature of *the* Prince, in his Highland dress; and on each side swords, belts, and light arms. The table was littered with fishing-tackle, books, maps, and papers. On a secretaire, at one end of the room, were placed writing materials; the horns of a stag royal were above it, on which hung various kinds of Highland bonnets, and a steel morion, with a white cockade in it. The

chairs, as Madge said, were difficult to come at, as each was put to a different use from that for which it was intended. One had a whole sheaf of arrows laid out on it, which Harry had been feathering; another had a box on it, another a collection of minerals, another an open portefeuille full of prints. In the window were some birds and flowers. Powder horns and shot belts hung from nails on the walls; foxes' brushes and deer's horns lurked in unseen corners; dog whips, hunting whips, and switches, lay about—as Harry said, to be quite handy; as I thought, where they ought not to be. There was a work-basket in the room, which had little trace of being much used; also a box for holding tools—I say holding, for it seemed not to be used for that purpose, for a chair served as resting-place for a hammer, a saw, and a bag of nails. Such was the den of my cousins, Madge and Harry Murray. Yet, spite of the disorder, the room had a cheerful, and certainly a used look, for through the window, which was a large bow one, shone the sun, the birds sang gaily, and the fire blazed brightly. In a twinkling the tools were thrust into their box, the arrows rattled into their quiver, the minerals swept into a basket, the portefeuille shut and placed on the secretaire, the box put on the ground, and Madge and her visitors seated.

Sir Richard asked for Ashton. He was well, and had ridden forth so lately, that she marvelled we had not met him. She then asked about the breaking up of our party, and told us that she heard that gentle Geordie had left Kilmaine the day after he had gone there, being in despair at hearing Miss Murray declare

that, although she knew it was the fashion for ladies to take snuff, nothing should ever induce her to do such a thing.

"But you have had a long ride; allow me to get you some wine till such time as luncheon is ready. Nay, no excuse; I must have my own way in this house, having ever been accustomed to get it." And ringing a small hand-bell, she desired the servant to bring wine. It was the same servant that I had seen in the morning, and I shall not soon forget the astonishment depicted on his face when he found three strangers seated in his mistress's room; but he said nothing, and retired, appearing soon after with a salver, on which were several bottles, and some glasses of a rare and beautiful shape. Charles told me they were Venetian.

When we had sitten a little space, Madge proposed that we should go out and see the place. "Not, dear Martha, that there is aught to show you, for the garden here is a wilderness, where only the white rose flourishes; every other fades and dies, or is neglected, for I must tell you we have no gardener. We got two new horses, and preferred having them groomed to perfection, to a trim garden; and the old gardener, poor body, is deaf and doited, too old to work or to want, and has been too long with us to have another placed over him, and so the place is going—going to ruin. But what matters it? it suits best with our sad fortune, and will last our time."

The road from the Hall to the stable was well and smoothly kept, and all the stable appointments perfect. There were several horses I had never seen before, and

a whole troop of grooms and strappers in attendance. Here Madge gave place to Harry, who now was in his element, for, poor fellow, his sad want never appeared where horses were concerned. We saw Prince Rupert, Day Star, Black Douglas, and several others. I am no judge of horses, but both Charles and my brother were loud in praise of their beauty, and the perfect order and method in the stable.

"This," said Harry, pointing to an empty stall—"this is Dreadnought's stall, my father's favourite. And hey! where's Hieover?" turning to one of the groom boys.

"Out, sir," replied the boy, touching his cap.

"And who took him out?" said Harry.

"Miss Murray's orders, sir."

"What is it, Hal?" said Madge, hearing her name.

"I was asking for Hieover. Tom says you have sent him out."

"Oh, yes; I know about it. It's all right," she answered, hastily.

"It's all right if you know about it," he answered.

"Now, cousin, if you would like to learn to leap, we'd have the bar set up in a minute, and you may have your choice of all these horses, save Day Star, who is still a little lame."

But I declined the offer, and soon after we left the stable. From it we went to the dog-kennel, to see Harry's pointers, and then returned to the Hall, where we found luncheon waiting. The dining-hall is a superb room; our own at the Mount is not finer. It is in oak panels, and surrounded with portraits; but midst the beauties who graced the walls I looked in vain for

one, which, by its transcendent beauty, I could recognise as the wife of my kinsman, the beautiful Mrs. Murray, of Ashton, the flower of Yarrow, but nowhere was there one that I could think was her picture. There was a fine portrait of the Prince, not in the Highland dress, but in a coat of rose-coloured velvet; one of Charles the First; and one of the ill-starred, though beautiful and innocent, Mary, Queen of Scotland.

Whilst we were seated at luncheon, the hall gradually became darker and darker; suddenly it was illumined by a vivid flash of lightning, and then a peal of thunder rolled and crashed over our heads.

"Hurrah!" cried Harry. "Is not that a brave sound? See! there it comes again," he continued, as another flash lit up the room, and seemed to play round the portraits. "Hark to it, Madge. Now, I would give something to know what makes it. Are they fighting battles in the sky, think you?" The rain now began to fall; first a few large heavy drops, and then a mingled torrent of hailstones. The wind, which had died away, now rose in gusts, sweeping through the trees till the branches groaned and cracked, and dashing the hailstones against the windows, some of which were broken by its fury. Some of the hailstones came down the chimney, and fell hissing in the fire, which burned on large iron dogs.

"Ah! rattle away, rattle away," cried Harry; "try as ye will, ye won't equal the thunder. Won't there be more thunder, Madge?"

"I hope not, Harry," she replied.

"Why, you like to hear it, don't you?"

"Not always, and to-day not at all;" and turning to a servant, she said, "Go, look, Robert, if the storm be over."

He returned with the intelligence that he thought the thunder was over, but no appearance of the rain ceasing.

"Oh! it is merely a thunder cloud; it will soon be over."

"This is unfortunate for you, Martha," she said, after a little pause. "Shall we remain here, or go to my den; I am sorry to say they are the only rooms fit to see visitors in, and they are bad enough."

I went with her to her den, and together we discussed some of the books on the table, looked at the prints in the portefeuille, and then came a pause. Madge appeared ill at ease, and her agitation increased when the gentlemen joined us, and Sir Richard announced that he feared we must trespass still longer on her hospitality, for that the servant declared that long ere now the ford would be impassable. Madge did not, as I certainly expected she would, she did not eagerly close with this proposal, but said:

"And what will dear Grannie think if you do not return? I think the ford cannot be up yet."

"She must just fancy the evil, which otherwise would be a reality. If we attempt to cross the ford, we are certain to be drowned; if we remain here, at the worst she only fancies that we are."

"But such a time of anxiety, you know not the misery of it, or you would not talk thus."

"Better be anxious for one night than miserable for life. No; my Grandmother must be allowed to remain in anxiety. I cannot permit life to be endangered in attempting to relieve her. Besides she knew that we were coming here, and will rate your hospitality too high to fancy that you would permit us to return, and so, poor Madge, remain we shall." Yet Madge never pressed us to do so. My brother noticed not this omission, but I did, and felt it most painfully. It was so different from all I could have imagined Madge would have done; so different from the way we would have done to her.

"I fear, dear brother," I said, "that we put Madge to inconvenience."

"Inconvenience—nonsense! How can you talk thus, dear cousin: but I was occupied thinking—let me see—let me see. Yes, that must be the way. Martha, you must occupy my room—the others share Harry's. It is so long since we have had visitors in this house, that you must pardon me if I make an indifferent hostess. Excuse me a moment till I go and see what can be done. To make you comfortable is, I fear, impossible, but I shall try and make you as much so as possible."

"And welcome?" I said, doubtfully.

"Can you doubt that, Martha? But the Hall is different from the Mount: how different, I know too well;" and Madge hurried away, and we were left with Harry. She was absent for a considerable time, but when she returned she was gay as in general she is. "I have played the part of quartermaster-general, in the

best way possible. You, Martha, occupy my room : cousin Dick shares Harry's. Harry, I have got three chairs and a cloak for you there, or the rug and a pillow here. There's a brave choice for you, and I have actually discovered a room in which a fire will burn where I mean you to be," turning to Charles. "The important matter of quarters being settled, I directed my attention to the commissariat department, and am happy to be able to tell you there is no chance of starving, for we killed a mart a few days ago, and the cook assures me there is routh o' meat and walth o' puddens, so

"First they eat the white puddens,
And syne they eat the black O!"

sang Madge, merrily.

"Quoth the gude wife to her-sel,
The deil clink owre wi that O!"

continued my brother.

"And though my father be not at home, I have told the butler not to spare the wine cask nor ale butt, in honour of this joyful day, and so, cousins," curtseying to us all, "I bid you heartily welcome. Eat, drink, and be merry."

We waited till very late for dinner in hopes of the return of my kinsman, but when five struck and he had not appeared, Madge ordered dinner to be served, and once again we re-entered to the dining-hall. As she said, there was no appearance of being starved, and she ordered a fresh jug of claret to be drawn when we left the gentlemen. She said they would excuse her having tea in the dining-hall, but her den was too

small, and it might terrify the birds, which she could in nowise think of doing : we then left them, and scarce were seated in the den when they joined us. I asked her if she would show us the library, but she excused herself from doing so, saying that her father liked none to enter it during his absence, but in place she would show me a few rare Indian, and other curiosities they had. The others asked permission to accompany her, and we went up-stairs.

"This is my father's sitting-room," she said, opening the door. It was a large handsome room, and a good fire burning in the chimney, for grate there was none, and in one corner there was a large couch made up as a bed. "Here I mean you to rest," she said to Charles; "do you think you can do so here, after the blue room?"

"An angel here watches my slumbers," he replied, lifting his eyes to a beautiful portrait, the only picture in the room. It was the portrait of the far-famed Mrs. Murray, of Ashton. Till now it appeared to me that Lucy Græme was the fairest creature I had ever beheld, but even she was not equal to the portrait I now stood before. Lucy was a gentle girl. Mrs. Murray a queen-like woman : Lucy, fresh and young as a Hebe or Flora : Mrs. Murray, commanding as Juno. Not haughty in appearance, as Miss Murray, but as one born to rule over willing subjects. Charles stood long gazing intently on the fair picture before him : how many varied associations must be linked with it—a brilliant commencement, followed by total failure and dark despair. The curiosities were hung on the walls,

or in glass cases, of which Madge had keys, but so much were we occupied looking at the picture of her mother that we scarce looked at them.

When we returned to the dining-hall we found it lit up; candles were burning in the sconces, but the shutters were not closed, the curtains were not drawn, and the window partly open, though the rain fell in torrents. The lights looked pale and ghastly, for the gloamin was only commencing.

"I am so fond of daylight that I never shut it out," she said, seeing that we looked astonished. "But whilst day is dying outside, and our tea making, or masking in, I shall sing to you, for I fear you are all inclined to sleep." Never did Madge's voice appear more rich and beautiful, as she sung this song, the words of which were new to me:

"Ance mair through Gownor-wood resounds
The hunter's bugle horn,
Ance mair the deep-mouthed baying hounds
Awake the early morn.
But never mair a Stuart's voice
Shall cheer baith horse and hound,
And Scotland's bravest hearts rejoice
To hear that welcome sound.

"Ance mair on bonnie Scotland's hills
The purple heather blooms—
The gowden broom by siller rills
The simmer air perfumes.
The thistle in the lanely dell
Again is budding fain—
But the snaw white rose we loe see well
Will never bloom again."

Before ten, she said she was sure that we must all be very weary of each other, and early hours being the fashion at the Hall, she would move that the house might adjourn. As for breakfast, we might choose our

own hour, it being a moveable feast, and to be called for at any time after six A.M.

She then led me to the room which I was to occupy, directing Harry to conduct Charles and Sir Richard to theirs. She remained with me some little time, and then to my surprise she wished me a good night.

"My dear Madge," I said, "do you not remain with me? I fear our unlooked-for visit has put you to much inconvenience."

"I am sorry, cousin, if you have seen signs of such a thing. I told you I was but little accustomed to play the part of hostess, and entreated your pardon for my want of skill; certainly there meant to be no lack of will."

"Nor was there any, dear Madge; but why not remain in your own room? Surely you are not so ceremonious with me as to think I could not share your room, when you were in mine at the Mount."

"This is a very different house from the Mount, as you may see, as I feel. But, believe me, I never dreamt of ceremony; but my father may yet return, and if so, he is certain, if he does not find me waiting him, to seek me here, and so, to spare your sweet dreams such a rude wakening, I shall go and wait him a little longer."

"And then return?"

"No! I shall not disturb you. I shall occupy another room. Good night, dear cousin. Believe that I am glad to see you in the Hall, though I am an indifferent hostess. Your brother is next door to you; so, pretty Martha, sleep in peace;" and so saying, Madge left me.

And now, another idea struck me. It was no lack of hospitality, but it might be dread of her father's displeasure which made her so unwilling to press us to remain. She said she was going to await his arrival, doubtless to meet the wrath which we may have brought upon her; if so, well might she say that the Hall was different from the Mount. There, we were never restricted as to receiving guests, and my Grandmother never so happy as when the house was full of our young friends. But here it might be otherwise, and our stay might cost poor Madge her father's anger.

Ere retiring, I looked out at the night. It was pitch dark, and the rain fell with a dull, heavy, sullen sound; the wind sighed and moaned as it swept through the branches of the old trees which surrounded the Hall, and whistled eerily in the wide chimney of my room. I could not account for the melancholy feeling which stole over me. In general, I am not affected by the weather, but to-night I felt sad beyond expression. The thought of leaving my dear Grandmother, and my only brother, hitherto my friend and guide, weighed heavy on me; and occupied by these and other sad thoughts, I fell asleep. How long I had been asleep I know not, but I was awake suddenly by a fearful gust of wind, which roared down my chimney, and shook and rattled my windows, against which it drove the rain in fruitless rage. I was therefore awake, when I heard distinctly a low whistle, very different from the shrill, piercing sound of the wind. My window was to the front, and my room in the same passage as the library. I then heard the hall door cautiously opened, and the

wind rushing in when it was so, several doors near it shut with a loud clash. I never thought of the possibility of danger, but the idea struck me that my kinsman had returned, and anxious to save Madge from the blame which I feared might fall on her on our account, I rose, and hastily began putting on my clothes (for Madge had insisted that I should burn a light all night, in case of awaking and feeling afraid). I put on my clothes, resolved to see my kinsman myself, and explain the matter to him. Hearing voices approaching, I cautiously opened a chink of the door, to satisfy myself that it was Ashton, ere I went out to accost him. They were coming along the passage, but ere they reached my door I had heard enough to make me change my mind, and bitterly to regret the hour that I had come to the Hall. I heard a voice—a man's voice—say distinctly: "Has your father returned?" whilst another, which, to my grief, I too easily recognised as Madge's, replied:

"No. Speak lower; my cousins are in the house. I was in agony lest you should arrive ere they retired. I made them sit in the dining-hall, with it all lit up, and an open window, whilst I sang, to warn you not to approach. I have been in the entrance-hall the last two hours, expecting you."

"Brave girl! how am I to repay you all I make you suffer?" said the man.

"And you are wet, weary, cold, and hungry, I doubt not," said Madge. "Hist! I thought I heard some one move." They were now passing the door of my brother's room. "No; all is quiet. I have provided

supper, and a good fire for you in the library. Step lightly, in case you waken my cousin;" and they passed along. There was, indeed, a good fire in the library, for on opening the door its ruddy light danced and flickered along the passage, disclosing to me (for now I opened my door a little more) my brother standing at his door, distress and astonishment depicted on his countenance, revealing, beyond all power of doubt, that it was Madge, accompanied by a man wrapped up in a horseman's cloak, which was dripping with rain. We saw not the faces of either, but I saw too well that the stranger was not her father. My brother saw me, and entering my room for a moment, in hoarse whisper he said to me:

"Martha, is that her father?"

"No, brother, it is not;" for I dared not lie; I could not say it might be.

"I thought it was not," was all he said, and then left me; and through the long, long night—and truly none ever appeared so long to me—I heard him pacing up and down his room as one too ill at ease to dream of rest—too sick at heart to heed the weariness of the body. I fell asleep towards morning, the sun was shining brightly when I awoke, and my brother standing beside my couch, his pale and haggard cheek telling how sad had been his vigil.

"I am going to return home, Martha. After what I have seen I could not bear to meet her again. I am as miserable as ever man was, for I have loved Madge since I was a boy? but that is all over now. Still I could not bear to meet her again. She has broken no

troth-pledge to me, for although she must have seen that I loved her, she has never given me to understand that she could return it, although lately I hoped she might. But, Martha, this is her home, and we are her guests, and we must not abuse her hospitality ; and so, dear girl, for my sake, as well as hers, let this matter rest between us two. I shall never see Madge again, and you will soon be leaving the country, and so we shall never hear more. Hasten home, dear girl. And, Martha ! never allude to what you have seen, not even to me." He kissed me, and turned to go away.

" But, dear brother, is it safe to return ? Will the ford be passable ?"

" The ford ! Ah, Martha ! did ever a man so weary of life as I am of mine, lose it ? It is now a charmed one, because so utterly valueless. No, dear girl, you and Derwentwater, with happiness before you, may dread danger ; I should court it in vain."

" Ah, Richard ! dear brother ! how can you think we could be happy, seeing you thus ?"

He kissed me, and pulling his hat over his eyes, went away. Madge ! Madge ! how I hated you for thus wounding the peace, ruining the happiness, of my dear brother. How could you remain indifferent to such a noble heart as his ?

She came to my room soon after, looking bright and gay as ever, to inquire how I had rested ; but I did not ask her to remain, and so in a few moments she went away. When we met again at breakfast she was sad and dispirited, but accounted for being so, saying that she had just heard that the oldest tree about the

place had yesterday been struck by the lightning, and rent in two, one half totally destroyed, the other so shattered she had been obliged to order it to be cut down, as it was likely to fall, and might hurt some one, being close to the stable court, or might, in its fall, bring down the stateliest tree they had, which grew beside it. "I am superstitious, I own," she added, "and dread the fall of that tree, the last of two which used long ago to be there, and an old prophecy says:

' As these twa trees flourish or fall,
Sae will the Murrays of Ashton Hall.'

In a terrible gale in '45, one was blown down; the other suffered so much they feared it could not stand, so my father had it hooped with iron, and I fear that has now been the cause of its ruin, by attracting the lightning."

"But could you not save the other half? it were a pity to sacrifice it. Wait till Mr. Murray sees it, at least," said Charles.

"No, I must consummate the ruin I have begun. I cannot endanger life for a silly fancy, perhaps. It is the last of the *ash* trees, and we are the last of the Murrays. Neither will sprout again;" and so sad was the look she gave to poor Harry, that I, from my inmost heart, pitied her, and had it been any but Richard whom she had slighted, I would have forgiven her all. She evinced no surprise when I told her that my brother had left, but appeared to think it most natural that he should wish, as soon as possible, to relieve our Grandmother's anxiety as to our safety.

"The ford will be quite safe," she said, "for the

river falls and rises very rapidly, and to-day is as lovely as if there had been no storm yesterday. As dear Grannie will now be at ease about you, I hope, cousin, that you will not hurry away. My father will regret much having been absent, and I think he must be back ere long. I half expected him last night ; I am sure he must be home to-day."

I thanked her, and said coldly (I doubt not), that I must return home immediately. Madge appeared surprised at my coldness ; and I do not wonder, it was so different from my usual manner. She said nothing, but pressed us to partake of the breakfast, which she herself never touched. When we had finished, I asked her to order the horses as soon as possible. She accompanied me when I went to put on my riding hat, and just as I was leaving the room, she said :

" How have I offended you ? Sir Richard leaves without even the common courtesy of saying adieu ! and you depart in haste, and with the coldness of a mere acquaintance. What have I done to cause this ?"

" You left us as suddenly," I replied.

" Say caprice, at once. Till to-day I thought Sir Richard and you superior to such weakness ;" and so saying, she opened the door, and walked away.

When I went to the Hall-door the horses were standing there ; Harry was beside them, whilst Madge and Charles were walking up and down the court-yard in very earnest conversation. When they saw me they ceased, and came to where the horses were standing, and he mounted me on mine.

"Do you wish me to take that to Sir Richard?" he said, touching a whip Harry held.

"Not I, in sooth. Cousin Dick gave it to me to keep till he came back again," replied Harry.

"What is it, Hal?" said Madge, hastily.

"It's Cousin Dick's bonnie whip: he gave it me when he went away. He had forgot it, and I ran after him with it, and he told me to keep it till he came for it."

"You will keep it long, then, Harry," she said, in a low tone.

"Then he will return soon, you may be certain; he is too fond of that whip to be long without it," said Charles, mounting. Leaning down, he addressed a few hurried words to Madge: "I shall see you soon again. We shall all soon test your powers as quartermaster. Next week you may be sure we shall return."

Madge returned no answer, but shook hands with him. To me she bowed, but said nothing, and I made no attempt to speak to her. And so we rode away. The approach took a turn, and again we saw Madge. She was standing as we left her; Charles took off his hat, and bowed to the saddle bow; she waved her handkerchief to him, and we saw her no more.

"What has happened to Sir Richard and Miss Murray?" he said. "What have they quarrelled about?"

"They have not even seen each other to quarrel," I replied, evasively.

"You are a bad diplomatist, sweet mistress mine, and I would not that you should be a better. You know

that they have quarrelled, and I know that no light cause would make them do so. Though not so far-sighted as Miss Douglas, their attachment to each other is very obvious."

"There, indeed, you are mistaken. I know Richard likes Madge, but I know also that she cares not for him."

"And I am certain she does ; but surely he can find that out himself."

"You are correct in saying that no trivial cause has brought all this to pass. But I promised Richard to mention it to none ; I am sure you will not ask me."

"Indeed I will not. But is it not some misunderstanding ?"

"No: would it were !" And we alluded no more to this painful subject.

As we drew near home, I dreaded, beyond expression, meeting my dear brother. I had no explanation to give him that could restore Madge to her place in his esteem, and the idea of seeing sorrow which I could in no way comfort, which time might deaden, but could not cure, pained me. We found my dear Grandmother in the oak parlour ; she was happy indeed to see us safely restored to her. My brother was not with her, so after we had sat a little time with her, I asked where Richard was.

"Richard ! Oh, he's gone two hours ago, I am sure," she replied.

"Gone where ?" I exclaimed, in amazement.

"I thought you had known all about it. He told me he had ridden rapidly across from the Hall, for he had just remembered having promised Kilmaine to join

a hunting party there the day. So he started aboon two hours, and tauld them to bring Soldan after him, and his things. He'll be half-way to Kilmaine by this time, I reckon."

"Richard gone!" I exclaimed.

"Gone to Kilmaine!" said Charles, in the same breath. "Then adieu to poor Madge Murray."

CHAPTER VIII.

OCTOBER 1.—October has commenced, and my brother is still at Kilmaine. My Grandmother had a few lines from him two days ago, when he sent for his gun, but he says nought of the Murrays, merely that they greet us, and of his own return he says, that as soon as he hears that my uncle is at Lincluden, he will go there from Kilmaine, and bring him to the Mount to settle certain matters—and so till my uncle's arrival my Grandmother will allow us to settle nothing as to the future. She says, and truly, that if I am to accompany Charles, my preparations will soon be made—if I do not, I shall not suffer so cruelly from "hope deferred;" but I cannot allow myself to dream of such misery.

And this fortnight (since the departure of my dear brother) we have been so much together, that I feel more and more how little I should value life without him. How rapidly the time has glided past. We have been constant companions during it, and uninterrupted by any visitors. Madge has not once been

here; my Grandmother frequently asks for her, but I have never in any way hinted at what I saw.

The Drummonds have returned to Carbrechan, and have invited us to visit them; I have no wish to do so, I am too happy at the Mount to have any desire to leave, and yet perchance we may go, for my Grandmother told me to-day that were it not that my uncle *must* soon return, and my engagement be settled one way or another, she would not allow Charles to remain here longer, as it makes us both so idle. I must own that it is true, for during the last fortnight I have neglected my duties sadly. I have not attended to the household affairs; indeed, my whole time has been passed in Charles's society, and she told him that he had been equally wasteful of precious time. He assured her he had not, for every moment had been devoted to me, and it could not have been better employed; but she told him that, were it not that my uncle must soon be here, she would send him to Carbrechan, and keep me at the Mount, to attend to all the matters that I have of late neglected. So we told her that to-morrow we would turn over a new leaf. "I shall store the apples gathered to-day," I said, "and superintend the preserving of the winter pears." Charles said he would assist me, but I say nay to that; he must answer some letters he has received from France, and read for a couple of hours, and so with these good intentions we retired. My Grandmother laughed, and said if we were such good bairns we might play together a little longer.

OCTOBER 3.—Play a little longer! Ah, would we

could. The hot tears blind my eyes as I write, and fall like rain-drops on my paper. Alas! the change since last I wrote, but forty-eight hours, and it seems a life of misery. As well as I can, let me narrate the matter. I promised my dear Grandmother to return to my household duties; accordingly I did so, and Charles remained all forenoon in the library occupied with various letters. After dinner we resolved to be together, and the afternoon being fine, we walked to Ringwood's cottage, and called on his dame, my nurse, and told her that *little Ringwood*, as they term her son, gives great satisfaction in the stable where he is learning.

We were seated in the "sweet gloamin" in the oak parlour, when suddenly we heard a horse approaching at full speed.

"It must be Sir Richard," I said, and was rising to go and meet him, when the door was burst open, and Madge Murray, flushed with hard riding, entered.

"Madge, my bairn," said my Grandmother, "the sight of you is good for sair, e'en what has become of you dawtie."

But Madge heeded not the greeting, but advancing to Charles, said, "Fly! fly! you have not a moment to lose; I have passed the dragoons on their way here to apprehend you."

"Fly! wherefore," said Lord Derwentwater.

"I know not, but a warrant is out for your apprehension. There is no time to lose; the dragoons will be here immediately. My father is waiting for you with fresh horses; do not lose time; fly ere it be too late."

"No, I will not fly! I have done nothing to require flight. Whilst Sir Richard's guest I would never conspire against his king. I will not fly, and if they attempt to take me, I shall sell my life dearly," was his proud reply.

"Alas! that will avail you little. Grandmother, Martha, can you not join me in counselling flight whilst there is time. Already the dragoons must be close at hand," said Madge, in the deepest agitation.

"Madge, how come you to know all this—what means have you of obtaining this information?" I said, for it struck a chill to my heart—the idea of parting with Charles—and the agitation she displayed recalled to me the letter the night of the ball, and thoughts to which I could give no name rose thick before me.

"What matters the means? Believe me, ere it be too late, his life is in danger. The warrant is in the hands of one who will show no mercy, and his attainder for '45 has never been removed. Oh, Martha, ere it be too late, persuade him to fly. Believe me now, if you never do again, that he is in danger."

Her evident and unfeigned emotion carried conviction not to be withstood, and we did at last persuade him, and I gave him my promise that if now he would save himself by flight, a few weeks and I would join him in France, never again to leave him.

"Come," said Madge, "we have not a moment to lose; I will conduct you to my father;" and she prepared to depart. In my agony I clung to him, for I felt that this separation was for ever. But his courage rose with the danger, and he jested gaily with me. I

would make a bad soldier's wife if I trembled thus when there was no danger.

"Nay," said Madge, cheerfully, "you wrong her there. She dreads an *engagement* less than a *flight*. But haste, for time is passing quickly."

We had said adieu, and he was leaving the room with her, when, in a voice of agony, she exclaimed, "It is too late! here are the dragoons!" and we heard the noise of horses rapidly approaching.

My dear Grandmother had appeared paralysed by the news, but now all her energy returned.

"No, Charley," she said, "you must *not* fly. The auld tower can yet shelter a frien. Come wi me. Fear not, Martha; it has stood good stead in a waur stress than this is like to be. Madge, I needna ask ye to remain wi your cousin; ye are no the ane to desert in time o' need." And she left the room, taking Charles along with her.

We heard the horses approaching nearer and nearer, and just as they halted my Grandmother returned.

"All is safe," she said; "but, my dear bairn, dinna look sae pale, or that will betray a'." Madge was seated at the window, from whence she saw all that was passing in the court-yard.

"Oh, no, Grannie; all is *not* safe. Captain Buchanan is in command—nothing will escape him; and that doubly-dyed traitor, Ker of Borland, is with him. For Lord Derwentwater's sake, receive them well: gain time by *every* means; all now depends on that. Ker knows too much, and will have no mercy. Every moment is worth an hour." And Madge left the room,

leaving us in utter ignorance, save that by every means we must gain time.

A few minutes afterwards Captain Buchanan entered, and Ker with him: the former, apologising for his intrusion, said it was in performance of his duty. My Grandmother in her courtly way received *him*, and said we required no excuse, as she trusted we would consider duty paramount to everything, however painful that duty might be.

"And believe me, madam," he replied, bowing, "it is most painful to me to have to disturb you and Miss Baliol in this rude way."

"Will you not be seated?" she said, remembering Madge's injunction to gain time—"will you not be seated, and partake of some refreshment after your ride?"

"By all means," said Ker, roughly—"by all means. Meat and mass hinder no man. The Papists had some sense in the first part of that saying. We have run the fox to earth, and may take our own time to be in at the death."

My Grandmother took no notice of this rude speech, so he continued: "Captain, if you have placed your men as I ordered, the bird cannot escape; so we may eat before we take it."

How sincerely in my heart did I thank Captain Buchanan for the haughty manner in which he replied—"Mr. Ker, I am in command of the dragoons here, and receive orders from none."

"Maybe—maybe; but this cursed old house has so many turnings in it, and we must not let our prize slip

through our fingers; so, by your leave, madam, I'll order them to have something ready for us, and we'll go and do our duty."

"And may I ask what that is?" she said.

"Oh, just to apprehend that bloody rebel traitor, Charles Ratcliff; and as the Baliols are 'tarred wi the same stick,' I brought a few dragoons with me in case of resistance."

"I know no Charles Ratcliff," said my Grandmother, proudly.

"Oh, maybe—maybe; but perhaps you know Mr. Edwardes."

"There is no Mr. Edwardes in this house," she replied.

"Faith, then, he canna be far out of it; but maybe he is fine, and likes to hae his lugs tickled wi a title—maybe you may know something o' Lord Derwentwater—eh, my leddy—is he not in this house?"

"It is your duty, you say, to find that out," she answered haughtily, and turned away.

"Oh, I thought I would make you change your tune. Now, captain, order in two o' your men."

"For what purpose?" said Captain Buchanan.

"To protect me in the performance of my duty," replied Ker.

"You are in no danger whatever, and I shall certainly not distress Lady Bethune and Miss Baliol by any such unnecessary display of force."

"Do you then refuse?" pursued Ker.

"Oh, most positively; my duty as a *soldier* is ever that of a *gentleman*."

"I thank you, Captain Buchanan," said my Grandmother. "My grandchild and I are thankful that this unpleasant duty has fallen to the lot of at least *one* gentleman. What do you wish us to do?"

"Whatever you please, madam. If you remain here none shall intrude: if you wish to accompany us, pray do so."

"We shall accompany you," she said, seeing Ker rise to go.

"Now are you sure," said Ker, "that you understand how to place your men, so that no one can escape."

"Mr. Ker, I know *my* duty; I hope you are equally sure of yours," he replied, haughtily.

"Well, well—maybe, maybe; see that they understand to capture, at any cost—to spare *none* that will not surrender;" and they left the room, we accompanying them—I more dead than alive, scarce able to go, yet dreading being left behind, and clinging to my Grandmother. When we opened the door we found two armed dragoons standing there. I nearly screamed aloud, for there was a dreadful reality in that sight that deprived me of all hope.

"Aye, this looks something like the thing," said Ker, chuckling, and rubbing his hands at sight of the dragoons. "Now, my lads, let no one escape—five guineas to the man who brings me Ratcliff, dead or alive."

"My men know their duty, and take orders only from their own officers," said Captain Buchanan.

"Aye, but this is one of Charley's men, and Hawley's

dragoons care not to come too close to them," said Ker, coarsely. Captain Buchanan made no reply, but his hand fell to the hilt of his sword. He soon mastered the involuntary impulse, and, followed by his two dragoons, walked along the passage.

"We shall begin the search here," said Ker, stopping at the door of my chamber.

"It is my granddaughter's room! but it matters not."

"It is sacred from my intrusion," said Captain Buchanan, remaining outside the door.

"I must do my duty," said Ker, entering.

The only person in the room was my woman, Alice, who was arranging some things. Ker seized her in his rude grasp, and scrutinised her keenly, but satisfied at length that she really was, as she said, my waiting woman, he quitted her, and proceeded to search below the settees, and in the presses, and in other places even more unlikely to conceal any one. He then proceeded to my bed, and *twice* thrust his sword into it.

My Grandmother observed this with indignation: "Sir," she said, "this is an indignity you will yet have to account for to her brother, Sir Richard Baliol."

"How, madam! do you threaten me? I vow there is not a place, not even the church, that shall harbour such a detested rebel as Ratcliff, if I can help it, and I'll sooner pull down the walls than that he should escape me. Here, you fellow," crying to one of the dragoons, "here you, mount guard in this room, and notice if even a mouse squeaks. Come along—do you hear, sirrah!"

"Will you permit this, Captain Buchanan?" said my Grandmother.

"Certainly not. Mr. Ker, your orders are to capture a man, not to insult a lady. The dragoons are under my command, and only do my bidding."

"How! do you also take this rebel's part?" thundered Ker.

"I do not, neither do I overstep my duty; my instructions are to assist you in capturing Ratcliff, not to annoy these ladies."

"And if he be concealed here, are there never such things as concealed traitors and false panels?"

"Show me where, and I will assist you in forcing an entrance."

"Say you so—come on then;" and he went along the passage, searching every room he came to.

And all this while where was Madge? We saw her not; but remembering her caution, we dallied as long as possible, till at last we reached the *blue-room*. I trembled violently, for now I knew that the danger was great.

"Ha! I have struck on the scent at last. I knew not *where* to find this room, but I know *what* I shall find," said Ker, on entering.

The room had all the appearance of having been for some time unoccupied. The shutters were partially closed. No fire in the grate, and all the furniture covered up. Mr. Ker went to the door to satisfy himself that the dragoons were close at hand, and after giving a hurried glance round the room, he turned to the portrait of Lord Derwentwater, which he examined

attentively, and said: "Oh, we shall find the young fox run to earth at last;" he then took a pistol from his belt, looked carefully at the priming, and continued: "Now, I am aware that this picture conceals an opening in the wall, but the trick of removing it I do not know. Will you please to open it?" he said, turning to my Grandmother. For one moment her caution forsook her, and turning very pale, she said,

"Have we traitors in the camp?" Instantly recovering, she added: "If there be such a secret connected with the picture, you may be certain that I should be the last to own it." But I who knew her countenance so well, I could see by the agitation which in vain she tried to repress, that it was true! that this was the hiding-place in which Charles had taken refuge!

"Now make haste, you are keeping me waiting," said Ker.

"You wait in vain," she replied, in a low voice. "Oh, very well, I'll soon find out the trick—this little conjurer soon solves all puzzles," he said, raising his pistol.

Still my Grandmother spoke not a word.

"His blood be on your head then. Captain, will you order in your men? I can swear that this picture conceals an opening in the wall, behind which we shall find Ratcliff."

Captain Buchanan left the room, and returned followed by four troopers. He ordered them to "ground arms," and as their guns fell with a heavy clang on the ground, I sank almost senseless on a chair near my Grandmother.

"Will you not retire?" said Captain Buchanan to me; but even if I *would*, I *could* not have done so.

"Will you not spare her this dreadful scene?" he said kindly, turning to my Grandmother.

"I must do my duty," she replied, sternly, as if dreading to hear the sound of her own voice. Had I known the secret, at all hazards I would have disclosed it, but till now I was ignorant of its existence.

"Madam, let me beseech you to spare *us* this dreadful duty," said Captain Buchanan.

"Hillo, captain, your guns hang fire sadly—the picture might have been riddled ere now," sneered Ker.

Captain Buchanan said nothing, but cast an imploring look to my Grandmother, who replied not, and then, as if he dare delay no longer, he gave the order, "Make ready."

I flung myself on my Grandmother's neck, and conjured her, for the love she bore me, to save him.

"Dear child, I am sworn at no hazard to betray the secret of that picture to an enemy—I must not break my oath."

"Present!" said Captain Buchanan. I was fascinated; I could not withdraw my eyes one moment from the picture. I could not rush forward and intercept, at least one bullet. I stood utterly deprived of motion—almost senseless. Slowly, as I gazed at it, the picture began to move; then more rapidly, as if some one were pushing it aside, and Madge Murray stood before us! *but alone!*

"Confusion!" cried Ker, leaping quickly into the small apartment in the thickness of the wall, which the

partial movement of the picture had disclosed. Madge looked a little paler, but her spirit revelled in danger ; my Grandmother and I were speechless, whilst Captain Buchanan told his men to withdraw, and wait outside.

" Confess now that I have good courage to sit to the very last; but, dear Grannie, your determination was like to cost me dear, and my jest I thought would have an ill end, when I heard Martha plead in vain." She might have continued long talking thus, we were both too agitated to reply.

" Have you satisfied yourself with my retreat, Mr. Ker? I scarce think that *you* would have kept up the jest so long," she said.

Ker came forth, looking like an evil spirit robbed of its prey. " Come now, Miss Murray, this won't do; we won't be trifled with any longer; tell me where Ratcliff is concealed, or I may find means to make you!"

" Hark you how bravely he threatens a poor girl! With a troop of dragoons, and a gallant captain to back him, he can actually speak *courageously*—I did not say *courteously*," Madge replied, with a sneer.

" By Jove, I won't suffer this," said Ker, furiously; but Madge never quailed. " Confess where Ratcliff lies hid, or——" and his hand fumbled with one of the pistols in his belt.

" You were told that no Ratcliff was here, and you see there is not," was her calm reply.

" I have proof under your own hand that will convict you," said Ker, drawing from his pocket the cover of

a letter, which I was sufficiently near to see was addressed by Madge to Lord Derwentwater! I know not what it means, but Madge's face coloured as she replied:

"That proves nothing, save that you have obtained, how, is best known to yourself, the cover of a letter addressed by me to Lord Derwentwater."

"And do you attempt to tell me that *you* don't know where he is! If not found here, you shall answer for his escape." He advanced towards her; she gave him a look of unutterable scorn, and was moving away, when he seized her arm, and exclaimed, "Stay, stay! we don't part so easily."

"Am I then a prisoner, and on whose authority?"

"On mine!" thundered Ker.

"Which I shall never acknowledge," was her haughty reply.

"Then, my bold madam, I shall make you. Captain, will you give her in charge to your men, till she comes to her senses—that's to say, if she ever was in them."

"Miss Murray will spare me such an ungracious office, by promising not to leave Mount Baliol," said Captain Buchanan, politely.

"A prisoner on parole! well, be it so," said Madge.

"No! I know the breed too well to trust them. It cost the father little to betray his cause, it will cost the daughter less to break her word," Ker savagely exclaimed.

Madge's eyes flashed, and for an instant the riding-whip which she held in her hand was raised on high.

I was not the only one who thought it would descend on Ker, for he was cowed, and, like a craven hound, he slunk behind Captain Buchanan, but dropping it quietly, she said to him: "There are only two reasons which prevent me from using this on you. The first, that it is a base lie, unworthy even of you, which you have just uttered; and the next, that I would not soil my whip by letting it touch you. *You!* a traitor twice told—false to your religion, and to your king! *You!* to dare to cast a slur on a Murray of Ashton! Captain Buchanan, I give you my word that I will not leave Mount Baliol till I have your permission—and now come cousin, ere *I* forget, as he has done, that I am *Miss Murray*, the daughter of his benefactor."

"And *instructor*," muttered Ker, as we left the room; and he again entered the recess, accompanied by two dragoons with torches, to search for the hidden means of exit from it.

"Where is he?" I said, the moment we were left alone.

"Safe outside—waiting for you," she replied, quickly.

"Thank Heaven! do not let us lose a moment!" and I was hurrying along the passage which led to the door, when she laid hold of me, and said:

"Good Heavens, girl! are you mad; every door is guarded by dragoons! No, you must come this way;" and she led me, for I was too bewildered to guide myself, to my own room, where we found Alice, who on our entrance ran to a chest, and took from thence a bundle. "Quick, quick!" cried Madge, "we have not a moment to lose," unfastening as she spoke the bundle.

"Stay, Alice, there is a little change; *I* am a prisoner on parole, your mistress must take my place." The bundle was now unfastened, and out dropped a coat and waistcoat.

"What does all this mean?" I said, in amazement.

"Simply that you must don these clothes, and as Harry Murray, ride with Lord Derwentwater till you meet my father. Quick, girl! every minute you lose may cost him his life. He is waiting for you, or rather for *me*, near the old well." And all the time that Madge was speaking, she was helping to attire me in my new costume, whilst I was too bewildered to lend any assistance, or to attempt resistance. I was passive in their hands.

"It is lucky that you found these things, Alice; they fit your mistress to perfection," said Madge; and now I recognised that it was a blue camlet coat and waistcoat, which my dear mother had worn when it was the fashion to be thus attired. I cared not what they did—I felt that they were dressing me, but I seemed unable to realise aught.

Madge then earnestly and rapidly spoke thus: "I have no time for explanations. Near the old well you will find Lord Derwentwater, and two horses. He is Madge Murray, you are Harry; your appearance galloping along will therefore excite no surprise. Hasten and join my father and Harry; they are waiting a few miles hence with a relay of horses. Lord Derwentwater cannot go alone. That would instantly excite attention, and betray him. You must go through

the *deep-den-chase*. The high road is probably guarded by dragoons. Leave the wood near the old quarry. If any attempt be made to stop you, draw your pistol, and fire. Nay, don't shudder; do it boldly. Some one will then quit the quarry. Cry aloud, 'There goes Edwards.' Then be ready to profit by the surprise of the dragoons: a thousand to one they fall into the trap and give chase. Then spare neither spur nor steed till you meet my father. After that, hasten back to Ringwood's; leave your horse there, and return here. I shall not leave this room till I see you again; they will thus think that we are together. You must go by the window, through the garden. Good luck go with you; I would I were in your place, but you know it is impossible; and there is one outside who will not regret the change; but I shall suffer enough till I see you here again. Through the pleached walk, down to the old well. Now haste!"

She assisted me to get out at the window, and then I was alone. But now, when all depended on myself, my courage rose with the emergency, and the shades of evening, which fell rapidly, gave me heart instead of taking it away. For the first time I *knew* the protection of doublet and hose, and thought less and less of my strange attire, and more of the delight of once again seeing my dear Charles, and of saving his life.

I saw a tall figure standing near the well. As I approached she came towards me, and said, "Miss Murray, I have been in agony on your account, lest I should have exposed you to danger."

"It is not Madge," I replied, dropping the large cloak which concealed my face.

"Martha! my own Martha!" and the delight of that moment more than repaid me for all I had suffered.

"We have no time to lose," I at last exclaimed.

"True. Yet what will life be without you?" He assisted me to mount, and spite of the dangers by which we were surrounded, we could not refrain from laughing at our various awkwardnesses in our new characters.

When mounted, we rode as quickly as the nature of the ground would permit. Charles was on Madge's noble steed "Black Douglas," whilst I was mounted on Ringwood's active and strong shooting pony, which luckily I had ridden before. We spoke but little; our hearts were too full to find utterance in words, but we grasped each other's hand as we rode along. At length we quitted the *deep-den-chase*, opposite to the old quarry.

"Halt!" cried a voice, at no great distance—"halt, or I fire;" and we heard the rattling of unslinging a carbine. "Who goes there?" continued the voice, we having pulled up.

"A friend," replied Charles.

"Advance, friend, and give the countersign."

"I have none. My brother, Mr. Murray, and I are returning to the Hall, and knew not that we should require one."

The dragoon came close towards us, but luckily it was now too dark to distinguish our faces. "You can't pass," he said; "my orders are to allow none to quit

the wood, and to detain all who attempt to do so. You must either remain here, or return to Mount Baliol."

"We shall do neither at your bidding," I replied, and discharged my pistol.

"Hillo! my young cock, you crow too loud not to have your comb cut," said the dragoon, drawing his sword. At that moment a horseman quitted the old quarry a little to the right, and rode hastily away from where we were.

"Hillo! Madge, there's Master Edwardes. Well done, good horse," I cried, gaily.

"Edwardes!" exclaimed the dragoon, quitting his hold of my bridle. "His head is worth a purse of gold. After him! after!" and the man was off in a moment.

We stopped for no more courteous dismissal, but started off at a pace that I had never tried the like of before, for I knew the road was an open one, and we tore along, unheeding everything. At length we came to a few cottages: some one darted out, and seized Charles's bridle, and a well-known voice exclaimed, "Hold! Madge, you have ridden hard—Black Douglas is quite blown;" whilst my kinsman Ashton was at my side, and assisted me to dismount, and hurried us into the cottage.

There was a stable-lantern burning in the room, which threw its dull and sickly light around. Charles stared at Ashton; by its dim light he looked even older and more careworn than when I had seen him at the Hall.

"You do not appear to recognise me," he said, sadly.

"Pardon me," Charles replied, "I do not; and yet I think I have seen your face before."

"Often—I am James Murray!"

"You!—you Secretary Murray!"

"At least, I am the wreck of what he was."

Charles seized his hand, and grasped it warmly.

"Ah, Mr. Secretary, times are sadly changed since we first met."

"They are indeed, my lord; nor am I less so. Forgive me if I hasten your departure, but time is precious to us to-night. You will find a change in the other room. Martha, Harry will see you home, but you had better return as Miss Baliol. Should they attempt to detain you, Miss Baliol will command more respect than a young page. In this room you will find a dress suitable for you, for we thought Madge might require it; she was to have been in your place, but doubtless saw reason good for the change. I need not tell you that your toilet must be the speediest possible."

My kinsman then left the cottage, and I hastily equipped myself in a riding dress of Madge's, which I found hanging up in the room. Scarce had I finished my toilet when Charles entered, once more in his own character. "Martha, I can never forget all that you have done for me to-night; but if my life be spared, it shall be devoted to prove my love and gratitude." But I cannot write what passed in those few bright, brief, happy moments, for my eyes fill with tears, and the paper is blank before me, when I contrast the difference

now that he is gone. I count the hours that must elapse ere I can hear of his safety—the weary, weary nights and days ere we meet again. Twice did Harry come and tell us that all was ready—we could not bear to part. At last Ashton himself came, and said:

“Martha, you endanger his life by this delay.”

Then we quitted the cottage. He supported me to my horse, put me on it, as he used to do in the happy days when we rode together.

“We shall meet again dearest,” he said.

“If not here, I trust in heaven,” I replied. And then all was over—we had parted!

“Come, my lord, you risk more lives than your own by this delay,” said Ashton. He sprang on his horse, and in a moment they were gone—their horses’ hoofs striking fire from the flinty road as they rushed madly along. We had parted! and who can tell if ever we shall meet again?

How long I sat trying in vain to follow their course with my eyes, spite of the darkness of the night, I know not. At last Harry roused me, saying:

“Well cousin, are you ready?”

I started, for in my misery I had forgot all, save our cruel separation; but I must now think of home.

“I am quite ready,” I replied.

“If you are not afraid to go through *the dead-man’s-moss*; I’ll take you to the Mount in a quarter of an hour.”

Fear! to-night I had no fear but for him, and my heart was too full of grief to have a place for any other feeling.

"No, Harry, I have no fear—lead the way, and quickly."

"I'll need no second bidding," he cried, gaily; and we started on our homeward way. He never spoke during the ride, and I could not. At last we reached Ringwood's cottage, having seen no one. My good nurse in a moment was out to receive me, and her husband took our horses.

"Eh, I wad suner hae burned my bannet," he said, "than that a' this sud hae happened and me no hae had a han in the ploy. My gude dame is trying to pit me through it, but I canna mak it oot ava."

"Whist, Ringwood, man," said my nurse, "whist man, dinna ye see Miss Baliol's like to faint. Tak her powny man, and lat her come in and sit down."

"No I thank you, nurse, I must hasten home; have you been up?"

"Na, but Ringwood gaed up wi the game, and says he faund Ker sweirin like a trooper at being cheated by Miss Murray as I hear, and the dragoons were in the hall wi Howison, drinking clean cap owre the riggin."

"And my Grandmother?"

"They tauld me," said Ringwood, "that she and the captain were seated thegither in the oak parlour, and Ker was rampagin thro' the hoose like a born deevil. When he saw my muir game, he tauld the cuick to mak a *spatch-cock* for him. Deil a ane suld he ever hae tasted wi my wull, but Mistress Alice tauld the cuick, that Miss Murray said she was to gie him the best in the hoose, and plenty o't, and sae I left him sattling about it."

"Harry, you will remain here till I go home," I said, turning to my cousin, when Ringwood finished his long story.

"But I promised papa to see you safe home," he said.

"But, dear cousin, I am at home now, and Ringwood will accompany me to the Mount."

"But I promised papa to see you safe home," was still poor Harry's reply.

"Then come along!" for I was too sad, too sorrowful at heart to attempt convincing him that now I was safer without him. Accordingly we hurried away, reached the garden-door, found it open, and by the pleached walk stole up to the window of my chamber. It was open, and Madge seated at it.

"Thank Heaven that you are safe!" she exclaimed, springing out at the window, and throwing her arms round me. "Thank Heaven that you are safe. I have been in misery since you left. But, Harry, you must not be here, my dear boy; you ought to have remained at Ringwood's."

"But I promised papa to see Martha safe home," was still poor Harry's answer.

"Quite right, Hal; and having done so, you must return to Ringwood's, and wait with his dame and him, for me." But this I would not allow, but told Madge that Harry must remain at the Mount; and having now entered my chamber, we consulted with Alice where he had best go. She said that Ker was now pretty well satisfied with ranging through the house, and was seated at his dinner in the steward's room, and

the captain and the lady were together. She could, therefore, easily take Master Harry with her to the housekeeper's room, as there was little chance of Ker showing his face there, May Hetley having told him that if he dared to come there again she "*would back the fire wi him*"—and May was well-known to be a woman of her word—and her aunt (Mrs. Hetley) would not say her nay in this matter. Accordingly, it was settled that Harry should go with Alice, whilst we hastened to my Grandmother. We found her alone, and had just time to assure her that all was safe, when Captain Buchanan entered. He said Mr. Ker began to think that their further search at Mount Baliol was useless, and therefore he had come to say adieu to us, to release Miss Murray from her *parole*, and to offer her an escort, if she were constrained to return to Ashton that night. My Grandmother said that such a thing was not to be thought of, and was thanking him for his courtesy, when we heard the tread of armed men along the passage, and my heart told me the horrors of this night were not yet over.

They halted at the door, and a sergeant entered, and said :

"Please your honour, we have caught Edwardes."

Had I died then, I had lived long enough, sooner than hear those dreadful words. Captain Buchanan said nothing ; but it appeared to me as if he also shared my grief.

"Where is he?" at last he inquired.

"Outside the door, sir," answered the soldier.

"Bring him in."

I could scarce breathe. I seized Madge's arm and grasped it convulsively. Oh! the unutterable agony of that moment, the dark reality contrasting with the bright hopes we had just felt of his safety. The despair of parting was not equal to the misery of meeting thus.

CHAPTER IX.

THE sergeant left the room, and entered again immediately, followed by two dragoons, with their prisoner handcuffed between them, and that prisoner was—Ringwood! my fosterer—*Little Ringwood*, as we term him, to distinguish him from his father, although, in truth, he is not little for his years.

"Ringwood!" we all exclaimed, "how came you here?"

"An it please you my lady, they brought me," he answered.

The men looked surprised, now that they were in a room where there was light; they seemed to fear that their promised reward was not quite so sure as in the dark they had supposed it to be.

"Who is this that you have brought?" said Captain Buchanan to his men.

"Please your honour isn't it Edwardes?" replied the sergeant.

"No, certainly not;" and then turning to Ringwood he inquired, "who are you?"

"Vera weel, I thank ye—hoo are ye yersel," was

Ringwood's calm reply. Captain Buchanan could not resist smiling, and then put his question in other words.

"But what is your name?"

"Ringwood Hunter."

"And who is Ringwood Hunter?"

"I tauld ye afore I was brawlies—mony thanks for speirin," answered Ringwood.

"Then *what* are you?" said Captain Buchanan, in despair.

"I'm Miss Baliol's fosterer, an ane of Sir Richard's grooms."

"And how came Miss Baliol's fosterer, and one of Sir Richard's grooms, to be captured by my dragoons?"

"Na, they ken that best theirsels."

"What were you doing?"

"I was oot airin ane o' the horses," answered Ringwood; and had I not known that my fosterer is a clever lad, and can read and write, I should have taken him for an innocent, so stupid did he look. I thought the poor lad was terrified at being taken by the dragoons, yet till now I had never known him show a trace of fear.

"Rather late for airing a horse," quietly observed Captain Buchanan.

"An forbye I had a message."

"Oh, a message—and from whom?"

"Frae Miss Murray."

"And may I ask what it was?" said Captain Buchanan, bowing to Madge.

"Certainly," she replied.

"I was to ride owre to the Ha' and say she wadna be hame the nicht, maybe."

"When did Miss Murray give you this message?"

"Oh just when she saw me."

"And when was that?"

"Whan I met her, sir," he replied, quietly.

Captain Buchanan smiled, and said:

"Well, what happened next?"

"I was riding awa to do her bidding, whan a' at ance thae chaps began chasing me. I thoct they wanted a race, an never looked ahint me, till a' at ance I faund a bullet whistlin past my lugs."

"And what did you do then?"

"I thoct they had some deevilry in their head, for the neb o' them is never oot o' mischief, sae I clapped to my spurs, and gae them a bit chase across the muir and moss. I'm thinkin their beasts hae na had sic a breathin this gey while. Atweel, ye'll allow that it's no like a dragoon, wi his lang stirrups, an a' his belts an bandoleers, wad ever come up wi ane riding echt stun ten, an accustomed to stiff lan an cross country work, and they were gey and sair taiglit wi their fences, an I had like to hae shawn them a pair o' clean heels, whan a wheen mair o' the ill deedie cratures started up afore me, wi guns at their shouthers, so I was obleeged to rein in, an so they grippit me. But I can tell ony ane, aye or twa o' them, that gin I catch them by themsels they'll get a skinfu o' broken banes afore we pairt, be it whaur it may."

"Well sergeant, what have you to say to this?" said Captain Buchanan.

Here Ker entered in great glee, having heard of the capture of Edwardes.

"Hillo, captain," he said, "so the bird is snared?"

"Faith, hardly; they have merely got one of the groom boys."

"Nonsense, nonsense—let me see him;" and slapping Ringwood on the shoulder, whose back was towards him, he said: "Well, Mr. Edwardes, or my lord, if you must forsooth have your title!"

Ringwood turned hastily towards him. "Eh, Maister Ker! is that you—hoos a' wi you? Eh, but I'm blythe to see you. Ye'll tell thae born deevils o' dragoons to let me gae, for I maun awa an supper the horses."

Ker's face of rage and disappointment was worth seeing. Even I could not refrain from smiling at it.

"Do you know this boy?" said Captain Buchanan.

"Oh yes, I know him—I know him to be one of the idlest, most good-for-nothing lads in the parish: the pest of the country side."

"Gude forgie ye for leein, Maister Ker," said Ringwood.

"I maun deny all that Mr. Ker has said," interposed my Grandmother. "I have known the callant since he was a bairn, and a better son could not be; and since he has been in our stable, Sir Richard has frequently notified to me that he was weel pleased with him."

"Thank you, my lady," said Ringwood.

"Nevertheless, I insist that he be detained. Ten to

one but he has assisted Edwardes to escape; where did you catch him?" said Ker, turning to the sergeant.

"An it please you I was about to report the matter to my officer in command," said the sergeant.

Captain Buchanan told him to say on, and he continued:

"An it please your honour, I remained at the corner of the wood, where you stationed me, some time, and saw nothing. It might have been half an hour or more, when I heard horses approaching. I gave the order to halt, which they did, but being ignorant of the countersign, I told them they could not pass; they gave their names as Miss Murray and her brother returning home——"

"Me!" interrupted Madge; "I have not been out of this house the last three hours."

"You must have been mistaken," said Captain Buchanan.

"Please your honour, I am *not* mistaken; they gave their names as Mr. and Miss Murray."

"And I assure you, Captain Buchanan, that I have not left this house since you accepted my *parole*."

"More than that, your honour, the young boy fired at me."

"Then you may be certain it was *not* Harry Murray; he would hit a less mark than you are," said Madge, smiling.

"Let me hear what he has to say," Captain Buchanan said, with a puzzled look.

"Please, your honour, just when the young chap

fired at me, this fellow came in sight, from some place or another, and Mr. Murray cried, "Hollo! Edwardes, well done;" hearing that, and having no orders to detain any but Edwardes, I let them pass, and spurred after him."

"And so lost your prize, your blundering, blind, stupid, pipeclayed idiot," said Ker, coarsely. "Why," he continued, "it's as plain as the nose on my face——"

"Which certainly is *very* plain," said Madge, half aside. Ker scowled at her, but, unheeding the interruption, continued to abuse the poor sergeant. "All this comes of trusting you soldiers, who have not one idea beyond parade and pipeclay. Yes, you fool, you give chase to a groom boy, and allow the prize to slip through your clumsy fingers, and to ride past you; but this shall be inquired into."

"I suppose I'm free to gang noo," said Ringwood.

"No," shouted Ker—"no, you are not free; aiders and abettors are equally liable, and so you shall find. You'll sleep in gaol for your trouble this night."

"Atweel, gin better canna be; but I'll hae coorse company there I'm afeared—yersel for ane, Maister Ker."

"Hold your tongue, and don't be insolent."

"Fy na, sir, I'll no be that; I'll just ceevilly tell the magistrate whaur ye war on the hindmost day o' August atween sax an seven;" and looking Ker in the face, he said hastily, "Na be here Maister Ker, what ails ye?" He might well inquire; never did a countenance exhibit a more sudden or startling change; from red to white, from domineering rage to abject fear: he quailed before

the young man, who stood quietly watching the effect of his words.

"Atweel, ye see, Maister Ker, I reckon ye'll alloo there's naething can be laid to my charge, but mayhap leading the dragoons a gey chase, and braking the win o' the useless beasts they war upon. I daursay the chieels maybe cudna sit better anes though, sae I'm thinkin the best thing ye can do is to lat me gang to my bed, and them hame to theirs, for I'm tired o' haeing a chiel at ilka oxter, as gin I war a puir bedral, no able to traivel alane."

"What do you say, captain?" said Ker, turning to Captain Buchanan. "Do you think we can make anything of this fellow. He seems to me to be half a fool."

"I am sure," said Captain Buchanan, "I have no wish to detain him."

"Then you may go, sir, but take care how you do the like again; another may not let you off so easily."

"Na, na, Maister Ker, ye'll no catch me at the like again I reckon, an sae a gude nicht to you; an gin ye hae nae objections my leddy, as these lads' horses are sair blown wi chasing me, I wad be blythe to help them to rub them down, an gie them a feed."

"Certainly, Ringwood," said my Grandmother. "I gie you the charge o' seeing that both the men and the horses are cared for."

They raised their hands to acknowledge my Grandmother's courtesy. As they were leaving the room, Captain Buchanan said:

"Sergeant Mayne, see that as soon as possible you

mount and follow me; and tell those below to let 'Boot and Saddle' sound in five minutes from this time." The sergeant and his party retired, and presently we heard the trumpet, and the trampling of horses in the yard. Captain Buchanan then advanced towards my Grandmother, and taking leave of her, he again apologised for having intruded on us.

My Grandmother assured him that she "could not regret it, as it had given her an opportunity of judging how well he merited the character which she had received of him from a mutual friend." I, in silence, bowed my adieux, but Madge went up to him, and said:

"Captain Buchanan, I am too apt to make rash speeches to shrink from owning that I have done so. The other evening I was guilty of ranking you as merely one of Hawley's dragoons—in our eyes no great praise; *now* I do you the justice of owning that you are worthy to have fought against them, and I rejoice to think that we are soon to be cousins; I hope we are friends." And she shook hands with him.

"I thank you, Miss Murray; but though I feel and appreciate the compliment you pay me, I am content to be one of Hawley's dragoons. And now, as Mr. Ker won't hear me" (for he had left the room when the trumpet sounded), "I must say you have spared me a most unpleasant duty. Had Mr. Edwardes been captured I must have done my duty, and have escorted him to Edinburgh. That you have saved him I feel, but do not wish to know how; but do not trust that another time I should either be blind or deaf. Edwardes and I

had crossed swords too lately for me to wish to lead him to a prison, if, without tarnishing my honour, I could avoid it. In that encounter I own I was foiled; this therefore might have appeared a cowardly revenge." And so saying he bowed, and retired.

"Grannie," said Madge, when he had quitted the room—"Grannie, I begin to doubt if 'birth makes the man, want of it the fellow.' There is Ker, a well-born man, has the actions and feelings of a base clown; and Mungo Buchanan, the son of a Glasgow weaver, not only acts, but actually feels like a gentleman."

And now Madge dawtie ye are falling into a waur error, condemning a' for the fauts o' ane. Mungo Buchanan in ony station would hae been an honest and honourable man, and keeping wi gentle kith, though not kin, he has learned their ways. Ker keeps wi horse coupers an a' the low fellows about the country, and so acts and thinks. Believe me, example is a powerfu master; but sit down dear lassie, and tell me about this day's wark."

"First, dear Grannie, I must go for Harry, who is lying *perdu* in Mrs. Hetley's room. Come Martha." I rose and accompanied her.

On entering Mrs. Hetley's room we found Harry seated before the fire, whilst she was amusing him by telling him some of her wonderful stories, of which she has a larger collection than any one that I know. Many a night when I was a child, and before my brother went to the wars, did we sit and listen to her tales of wonders! And well I remember how I used

to tremble when going along the dark passages which led to my nursery, lest some of the spectres should start out and seize me.

As I said, we found Harry seated, and listening as attentively as if he had never heard it before, to Mrs. Hetley's favourite story of the ghost of a lovely lady who used to haunt the east wing of the Mount; and how her spirit was at length laid by burying in consecrated ground her bones, found in the draw-well; and how a holy priest for three long nights, with *bell, book, and candle*, did watch and pray for peace to her unshriven soul. Although we all knew the story perfectly, Harry begged that we would remain and hear it to the very end; and when Mrs. Hetley (seeing that we were anxious to leave) tried to skip parts, he invariably put her right, reminding her of some part which she had omitted.

At last the story was concluded, and we hastened back to my Grandmother.

"Now sit down, dear bairns," she said, "and Madge dawtie tell me all this frae beginning to end, for to me it is a ravelled pirn that I can mak naething o'."

"There is little to tell you, dear Grannie—at least, there is little that I *can* tell. You must take my word for so much, and ask no questions, for I can explain nothing. I learnt, no matter how, that there was a warrant out for the apprehension of Lord Derwentwater; I knew it to be but too possible, as his attainder had never been removed; and had I not known the country likewise, and taken a near road, the dragoons

had been here before me. This is all I can tell you about my information. The rest you know."

"Indeed, dear bairn, I do not. Tell me how you managed his escape, and by what means you were concealed in the blue room, whaur I placed Charley," said my Grandmother, stroking Madge's long dark curls.

"Oh, our adventures were many. The moment I saw that Ker was of the party, all hope of concealment was over, for I knew the hidden chamber was no secret to him. Do not ask me how, dear Grannie; I must be content to seem mysterious; but when you spoke so confidently of concealing him, I readily guessed where. I have long known the existence of that chamber, and the passage behind the picture. In the happy days of childhood I have been in it many a time. Sir Richard showed me all; for it used to be the favourite scene in which I was a captive Princess, and Richard a Paladin *sans peur*, sworn to release me or die. My knowledge of the secret, and consequent dread of reproof, either for myself or Richard, gave a reality to our adventures, which added not a little to their charm. I certainly did not suffer half so much to-night when I knew that the carbines were pointed at me, and the next moment might be my last, as I did one day when I was visiting Richard in prison—I as Blondel, and he as Cœur de Lion—on which occasion the dreaded Emperor of Austria and a gaoler entered the room, under the guise of *you*, dear Grannie, and Howison. Happily for Lord Derwentwater to-night, my terror then sharpened our wits to the discovery of the secret

door by which he made his escape. Ah, those were indeed happy days!" and Madge tried in vain to repress a deep sigh. "On leaving this room I fortunately met Alice, to whom I confided that I must ride home in masquerade; then I hurried to Lord Derwentwater's hiding-place, and, touching the spring, entered, ere he had time to shoot me. The secret door gave us egress to the daylight, and presently I found Ringwood. Martha, I do not envy you the broad lands of Lincluden, which will be yours, nor any of your many bonnie *dies* and braw things, but I do envy you that brave, bold, ready fosterer of yours, who comprehends what you wish ere you express it! Our plans were settled in a moment. I need not repeat them, because you were yourself a main instrument in carrying them out—a risk you had not incurred had I not been obliged to make you my substitute. Unhappily, we had never thought of closing our hidden doors after us, and as these would have been too dangerous an evidence of flight, I hastened back, and found, to my dismay, that they only fastened *inside*. I was meditating behind the picture how to return to my brave *protégé*, when you saw me besieged and made prisoner of war. Here end my adventures; and now Martha for yours."

As well as I could I told them, and Madge tried to console me by saying I might rest assured that he would be well taken care of, and would soon be safe on his way to France.

I *am* thankful that he is safe, but I cannot but feel the present annihilation of our hopes—the uncertainty when we may meet again.

Madge was most desirous to return to the Hall, now that all was explained ; but my Grandmother would not hear of such a thing, declaring it was neither safe nor *seemly* for her to be galloping about the country in the middle of the night when the dragoons might still be about; and what put the matter quite at rest was an observation of poor Harry's, who, of course, was willing to do as Madge desired, but wondered " which of cousin Dick's horses she would ride, as *Hieover* was the only one of theirs here, and it was at Ringwood's, and Mr. Edwardes had ridden poor Black Douglas so hard to the moorside cottages, that he told a groom to lead it to the Hall, and to bring it over to the Mount early the next morning."

" You did quite right, dear Hal: we must quarter ourselves here to-night, for I could not think of risking any of Sir Richard's horses in a dark night on a rough road, and one they are so unacquainted with, as the one between the Mount and the old Hall," said Madge bitterly, for I see she resents Sir Richard's sudden departure from the Hall, and she must feel there is a change since then.

It being settled that she was to remain at the Mount, we sat late talking over all that had occurred ; and when we retired for the night we had not exhausted the subject, and during all that sad night poor Madge tried in vain to console me, for neither of us slept—I was too unhappy to find rest, and she was trying to give me comfort. One thing in this strange story she never alluded to, and I lacked courage to ask her—I mean the letter in her writing to Lord Derwentwater which

Ker produced. What can all this mean? What can be the mysterious connexion between Madge Murray and my affianced husband? What can this secret and clandestine correspondence import? Coward that I was that I did not ask her at the time; now the opportunity is gone.

CHAPTER X.

OCTOBER 4.—This morning the groom from the Hall was early at the Mount, with a note from Ashton to Madge, requesting her immediate return, but no word whatever of Charles. Madge assures me that I may be certain he is safe, else her father would not be at the Hall. I trust it is so, but this doubt is fearful. She has ridden across to the Hall, but promises to send a note to me the moment she arrives at home to say all is safe, and if possible to ride over in the afternoon to narrate the particulars of his escape.

A note from Madge! He is safe. I thank God that it is so. Madge's note is brief, being merely these words:

"DEAR COUSIN,—I find I have left my favourite whip at the Mount. Please send it per bearer, as I cannot endure being separated from a whip I like. I reached home in forty minutes—good riding you will allow—and found, as I said, that *all was safe and right*, spite of my speedy recal, which seemed to terrify you. I shall not ride across to the Mount as I promised, as I

hope this note will satisfy you that all is as well as even *you* can desire.

"Thine,

"MADGE H. MURRAY."

I found the whip, and took it myself to the groom to see if from his answers I could glean aught; but he seems to know nothing more than that Miss Murray told him to ride to the Mount for her whip, which she had forgot. I asked him if he had seen my kinsman Ashton; he said he had, that he and Master Harry and Miss Murray had come up to the stables to look at the horses, "and had tauld him to haste him back, so he cudna stay langer;" and saying these words, he rode off. Reassured by Madge's note, which, though unsatisfactory as to particulars, still contained the important fact that he was safe, I went to church, and did sincerely return thanks for "*loving kindness*" far beyond my deserts.

OCTOBER 5.—How slowly do the hours drag on. I can do nothing but sit and think on the days that are gone. At every turn I am reminded of the sad change. If dear Richard would only return to us, then something might be done, and some arrangements made as to the future. Of one thing I am certain, that nothing shall induce me to remain in this country away from Charles. I feel that I cannot live without him.

Richard has returned! He is most indignant at the way that Ker has behaved, and with difficulty could we persuade him to let the matter rest as it is. He praises Captain Buchanan much, but says it is merely what was to be expected from a gentleman and a sol-

dier. We told him all the particulars of the escape. "Brave Madge!" he said repeatedly. When he heard my part, he told me he had long known that he had the best, but till now he knew not that I was the bravest of sisters.

I wished to hear how matters were between him and Miss Murray, so I said:

"And how did you leave Miss Murray?"

"Quite well," at once he replied.

"Is she to be my sister?" I continued.

"Never!" he replied earnestly. "I do not deny that I went to Kilmaine, fancying such a thing possible; but spite of my utmost endeavours, I never saw Miss Murray but the image of Madge rose before me, and all the beauty of her rival was in vain against the fascination of the dear girl I have loved so long—the brave companion of my boyhood's years. So I felt I never could wrong Miss Murray so fearfully as to offer her my hand, whilst I knew my heart to be so devoted to another. And then I began to feel that we had been too hasty with Madge. That I had condemned her unheard; and so hope began to dawn, and then less than ever could I think of another. Madge, I feel assured, is innocent."

I made no answer to this assertion, and he, unheeding my silence, continued:

"But this state of doubt it was impossible longer to endure, so I resolved to leave Kilmaine and return home, and if you could tell me nothing, to do now, what I ought to have done that morning—to speak to Madge herself—to tell her what I had seen, and hear

her own explanation of the matter ; and my word for it, Martha, that I have been in the wrong ; I have been misled by jealousy, and formed a hasty judgment ; but that Madge is to blame, no lips but her own shall ever convince me of ; and a thousand times sooner will I doubt the evidence of my own senses than doubt her. And should she give me no explanation, I will still believe her to be all I have ever known and found her. Unscrupulous as to the *appearance* of evil she may be, but no one is more free from the taint of the reality."

As soon as his horse was ready he mounted, and has ridden to the Hall, where I trust he may find all as he wishes—nay, I *am* convinced that he is right ; that he truly judges Madge Murray.

He has just returned, and has not seen her, for yesterday morning they left the Hall, but where they have gone we know not. The servant, whom my brother first saw, merely said there was no one at home, and when he proposed to await their return, the man said he knew not when that might be, but he would get Roberts—Roberts is butler at the Hall, and knows my brother well—but he could say but little, merely that immediately after breakfast yesterday the horses had been ordered, and Ashton, accompanied by Madge and Harry, had ridden forth, and had given orders to a groom to go to Duns-muir in the evening for the horses. The groom had done so, and that was all that Roberts knew. My brother asked when they were expected to return. Roberts knew not ; it might be the end of the week—it might be later—who could say ? but everything

must be in order for their return, be it when it may. Knowing the horror that Ashton has that any questions should be asked about him, or his concerns, my brother said no more, and with this most unsatisfactory account he returned to us. Conjecture as to their whereabouts is utterly vain. My brother evidently is distressed, but his love and confidence seem to increase the more they are tried. He seems to have no doubt but this sudden movement is taken at Ashton's request; but once he hazarded a remark which went like an ice-bolt to my heart, for it seemed to be the shadow of my own dark thoughts, to which I dare give no name. That he never meant it in that light I am well assured, for he knows not of the letters, and I cannot bring myself to mention that circumstance to any. It is not that I doubt Charles; I could not do so and live—no, I am certain he is true to me; yet it made my heart grow cold when Richard suddenly exclaimed:

“I wonder if Madge's hurried flight can in any way be connected with Derwentwater's?”

OCTOBER 6.—Richard has just seen our kinsman Ashton. He was returning from shooting on the *Spring-well Muir*, when who should he meet walking along but Ashton! with one of Harry's dogs at his heel. My brother says that Ashton was highly amused at the manner in which he (Sir Richard) greeted him, as if he had returned from another world, and that he fairly laughed at the solemn and earnest manner in which he inquired for Madge. “And Martha,” continued he, laughing, “Martha—only guess the cause of the sudden flight? Miss Peggie Paterson wrote to announce a

visit, and Madge took fright at the idea of such an infliction, and started immediately to another friend's; so there we have been giving ourselves a deal of unnecessary trouble, fancying everything but the truth, which is simple enough."

"And where is Madge?" I said.

"Faith, I never thought of asking, being quite satisfied if she be safe and well. Ashton bid me give you this pamphlet, and he hopes you will be warned by it." And so saying, Richard gave me a small book, and left me.

I am thankful that my doubts are unshared by him—that he can believe this story of Ashton's, of the cause of Madge's sudden flight—but *I* cannot, and the whole affair appears more inexplicable than ever, and the cause assigned most improbable; but Richard thinks not thus, and I shall not attempt to shake his belief. My dear Grandmother received the story in silence, but I think I can see that she also has her doubts; and once or twice, when Richard was not present, she said, "Ashton's a queer man, puir Madge wi' a' her fauts, is no the ane to grudge the hospitality o' the Hall to her puir mither's ain cousin—he is a strange man, Ashton."

Oh, Madge, dear Madge; could I but see you again, I would conjure you by the memory of our happy childhood, by the love we have ever borne each other, at once to end this fearful state of doubt. Again to assure me that you would *never* come between me and any one I loved. Never to supplant me in the affection of one

dearer to me than my life. Why did I not that night ask an explanation about those letters? Alas, opportunity once gone, I fear returns no more. The pamphlet which my kinsman sent me is a most curious one: it is entitled *Jacobitism Triumphant*, and is just published, to warn us that the post is not to be trusted. It gives an account of a trial, instituted by the postmaster of Linlithgow, against Provost Bucknay, and Dundas of Philipstown, because they accuse him of opening their letters, and of betraying them to the government. I doubt not but my kinsman has sent me this on purpose to put me on my guard as to what I write to Charles. Ah, he little knows that we will leave kings and the affairs of state to wiser heads, and that more insignificant persons and things will be the subject of our letters, and possess more interest for us.

OCTOBER 8.—One week to-day since we parted; but one week, and yet it seems to me an age. If time drags thus slowly, how shall I ever exist through the dreary months that may elapse ere we meet? I take no interest in anything around me, but pass my days in a listless, dreamy state, recalling the time we were together, and trying to remember every word that ever he addressed to me. Then I close my eyes, and try to cheat myself into the belief that he is again by my side, that when I open them I will again see his handsome features, once more hear his melodious voice—alas! it is delusion all—the salt sea rolls between us, and the bitter tears fall fast when I look around, and see his place vacant. Could I but hear of his safety, I think

I would be more resigned to his absence ; but uncertain of that, ignorant of where he may be, I often feel as if this wretched existence must soon cease.

OCTOBER 15.—These words were nearly coming true, for I have been ill, but to-day I am better, for to-day I have received my long-expected letter from Charles, written the moment he landed in France. He is safe and well, thank heaven, and ere now, once more with his kind friends, for he was just starting for Paris, from whence he was to write to me, and where he is to remain till he has heard from me, telling me where and when I will join him. He says he will meet me in any part of France I may choose to name, and if I do not agree to this, he will, at all hazards, return to Scotland for me, as he feels that without me his life is not worth preserving: he tries to convince me that he feels the separation as much as I can do; but that is impossible; he has

“Change o’ face and change o’ place;”

and here, everything serves to recal him to me, to remind me—could I ever forget it?—of the time we were together. Madge’s name is only casually mentioned: merely a hope expressed that she is well. Shame, shame on me that I ever suspected her of evil. I will at once go to her, own my error, and plead for pardon, for she is once more at the Hall. I have a note from her also, announcing her return, but saying, that as she feels unwell, and has lately been where the fever is raging, that for fear of infection I had better not come to see her, but hoping when I have any new French fashion that I will let her know. I will allow no such selfish reason

to keep me from the dear girl. I will go to her at every risk. Sir Richard has ridden to Lincluden to ask tidings about my uncle, whose long absence from home surprises us much. I shall make Ringwood accompany me, and ride to the Hall.

I have been at the Hall. Would I had not; would that I had done as she requested me, and had not gone. I have seen her—she is quite well; yet rather had I seen her laid low, on a sick bed, than have seen what I have seen. Oh! Madge, Madge, how sadly have I been mistaken in you; how cruelly have you deceived us all. And my poor brother—whether or not to mention to him what I have seen I cannot tell. I must consult my dear Grandmother; yet it will grieve her little less to hear the tale which I have to tell.

I rode very quickly to the Hall, fearing that Madge was very ill, as I know that she does not readily complain. Roberts opened the door, and I hastily jumped off my horse, and said:

“How is Miss Murray?”

“She is quite well, Miss Baliol, but she is out,” he replied.

“Out!” I exclaimed. “That is impossible, she wrote to me that she was not well.”

“But I assure you Miss Murray is out.”

“I am glad to hear it, then, for she must be better; but are you quite sure,” I repeated, incredulously.

“I am quite sure, Miss Baliol; she went out immediately after my master, and told Master Harry she would return in a short time,” asserted Roberts.

It was impossible to doubt longer, yet it struck me

as passing strange, particularly too that she should go out, even for a short time, without Harry, knowing, as I do, their inseparable habits.

"Is Master Harry at home? I shall go and wait with him," I said.

Roberts led the way to their den, but it was tenantless; he said he would go and look for Master Harry, and left me—I amused myself some time looking at the arms and accoutrements around. I then heard voices talking in the room beyond their den, the door between the two rooms being partially open.

"At last you have come to me," said a voice, I knew at once to be Madge's.

"Indeed, darling, you have not longed more ardently for me to be with you, than I have done," a man's voice replied.

"Now that Papa has gone to Elibank, surely you can remain with me. Indeed you are safe here. They shall have my life ere they touch you."

No answer was returned to this, but I suppose he had signified that it was impossible, for Madge in her most imploring tone continued, and I could not but allow that few could resist that voice,

"Oh! do not again leave me—you cannot imagine the misery I have suffered since you went; only remain with me, and I will do any—everything for you. Surely you do not fear to trust me. I will go anywhere—do anything—only, only stay with me—do not again leave me."

A breath of air from the window which was open,

blew the door a little more open, and I could see the scene within the room. Would I had not—a man was seated near the fire, at his feet, with her arms embracing him, knelt my cousin, Madge Murray! whilst he twisted her silken curls round his fingers, and fondly stroked her head. I could see neither of their faces, but that man was in the dress of a *common peasant*!

I felt sick at heart, and remained motionless. At that moment Madge's keen eye caught a glimpse of her brother crossing towards the house. In one instant she bounded up, and exclaimed, "There is Harry; quick, quick! he must not find you here." The next, they had left the room.

I stood for some time unable to move, and revolving in my mind what I ought to do or say. Whether to see Madge and tell her what I had seen, or leave the Hall and let her remain in ignorance. Harry's entrance decided me on the latter course.

"Well, cousin," he said, "do you want anything?"

I knew that Roberts would be certain to mention to his mistress that I had been at the Hall, so I said:

"Yes, Harry, I want to tell you a secret, but you must not tell it again to any one."

"Well, I won't, except to Madge; I have lots of secrets, but none from Madge; I tell her all mine, and she tells me all hers."

Poor Harry, I thought, you little guess some of Madge's secrets.

"Madge," he continued—"Madge tells me things that she would not tell cousin Dick or any one;" and

then with a sigh he added: "I sometimes think that it is because I am not like others, and yet you know, cousin, I cannot help that."

Heaven help you, poor lad, I thought, it is perhaps well for you that you are different from others; and then I said to him,

"Now for the secret, which I wish you to tell Madge. Do you remember Lord Derwentwater?"

"No; who was he?" he replied, with a puzzled look.

"I am speaking nonsense, Harry—I meant Edwardes; you remember him?"

"Oh, Master Edwardes! To be sure I do; he said I was the best shot that ever he saw; and if the King of France could only see me shoot, he would make me captain of his sharpshooters—he did indeed," Harry replied, with a proud look.

"I have no doubt he did, dear Harry. Well, tell Madge that by this time he is safe with the King of France—but don't tell any one but Madge."

"Indeed that I won't, for Madge says that no gentleman ever tells again anything that a lady says or does, and I never do—but I am to tell Madge this?"

"Yes, tell Madge; and now come and help me to mount." Harry made no objections to my leaving the Hall so speedily, but at once accompanied me downstairs. We found the horses waiting at the door; I mounted, and rode away, inwardly determining never again to enter a house in which such strange and improper scenes were enacted.

I could not help saying repeatedly to myself, on my homeward ride, "Oh, Madge, if you can so ably in-

struct your young brother in the feelings of a true gentleman, how comes it that you are so ignorant of those of your own sex and rank? If you can teach him so well how a man ought to act, was there no one to tell you the proper *retenue* to be observed by a woman? Why are your many noble and endearing qualities rendered null and void by this foul blot on what else had been so fair? Can it be that that love, which my noble, handsome brother has sought for in vain—can it be that you have stooped so low as to bestow it on a base-born peasant?” Sad thoughts such as these occupied me, and had I then encountered my dear Grandmother, I should without doubt have told her what I had seen and heard; but now, after the lapse of some hours, my resolution begins to waver. What I saw was never meant for my eyes—the words I heard were never meant to meet my ears. It seems an unkind thing to rob a poor young girl of one steady friend. The evil, if evil there be, could not be stopped by my Grandmother; and Madge has too proud a spirit to brook interference. Yet I used to think that love could easily lead her; that though she may have ever resented all poor Peggie Paterson’s attempts to lead or guide her, even when Peggie was in the right, yet from my Grandmother she bears anything, being firmly convinced of the tender love she has for her. I shall wait, at all events, till I see if Madge takes any notice of my visit, and shall be guided accordingly. I shall give her a chance of explanation, and shall not condemn her unheard. When I remember all that I have ever known of her—when I think over the happy days we have spent together—above all,

when I call to mind her proud nature, her boast that she is not one of the *bonnie* Murrays o' Kilmaine, but one of the *proud* Murrays o' Ashton—when I call all this to mind, I feel inclined to imitate my dear brother's confiding nature, and to doubt the evidence of my own senses, sooner than doubt Madge Murray. And yet it cannot be—I cannot doubt: not only did I hear that endearing, imploring tone of voice, but saw her kneeling at a man's feet, and that man a peasant! And this day, which began so happily, with my first letter from Charles, to have such a sad ending!

CHAPTER XI.

I HAVE just received a note from Madge! She has fallen—fallen—fallen in my estimation to rise no more. I would think, from her note, that she was the most innocent creature, did her actions not prove to me that she is guilty. The note is one tissue of deceit; and she—Madge! whom I used to think so far above all guile—she to stoop so low. The note, however, has confirmed my resolution, not to allude to the matter to my Grandmother. One who could write thus, after what I have seen, would not be influenced by aught that we could say; but though I keep to myself this dark matter, never, never again can I be on friendly terms with Madge Murray.

“Ashton Hall,—Two of the clock.

“MY DEAR MARTHA,—On my return from ‘a step-and-a-half owre the door-stane,’ I was grieved to find from Harry that I had missed seeing you. It was like your kind self to ride over to give me the good news. I am sorry I did not see you, yet for your sake it is perhaps as well, as I cannot be quite certain that the *fever* is not hanging about me. Harry was not exposed to the in-

fection, so have no fears of having seen him. No doubt, after hearing that I was ill, you were surprised to find me out. I thought the fresh air would cure all evils, but find I was mistaken. I shall send you a bulletin of my health to-morrow, but on no account run the risk of infection by coming to see me: To all others I shall be not at home. I shall come and see you ere you start for Auld Reekie. Trusting that you will keep me *au courant* of all the French fashions, I remain, dear Cor.,

“Thine for ever,

“MADGE HOME MURRAY.”

To this letter I returned a verbal answer, to the effect that I should be glad to hear that Miss Murray was better, and that assuredly I should not be at the Hall again. Does she imagine such a note as that could deceive me? Ah! Madge, Madge, would that my steed had stumbled and disabled me, rather than that it had carried me safely to Ashton Hall this day. Fear not that I shall again attempt to see you; and the hint that you will not be at home to others is, I trust, useless. When Richard hears what I have to tell, even he will allow that henceforth all intercourse must cease between us.

Instead of Richard returning to us this evening, he has sent a messenger with a letter to my Grandmother, announcing to her, that hearing from the housekeeper at Lincluden that her master is laid up in Edinburgh, in consequence of a bad fall from his horse, he has determined to proceed immediately from thence to see him, and as “Baliol’s Lodgings” (the name of our house in town) is now ready for us, that he hopes we

will lose no time in joining him there. My dear Grandmother is naturally anxious to be with her son ; she has, therefore, given orders that all things be ready for us to proceed to Edinburgh the day after the morrow. And for my own part I care not how soon, or where we go, for I think nothing can be more desolate than to remain in the same place, where lately you have been with those you love, when they have left you. It is so sad to see all around the same, and you to feel so different. Yet when I leave the Mount, when the time actually comes to quit it, I know I shall be sorry, for till lately I have been so happy here, I may never be so happy again—I may never again return to dear Mount Baliol—never again be sheltered under the roof-tree of my forefathers—never again see the home of my childhood—the scene in which Charles plighted his love to me.

OCTOBER 16.—To-day, it may be for the last time, I visited all my poor pensioners, not forgetting Old Peg, whose pretty daughter Peggie shed many tears on hearing that I was going, and repeated several times, “Oh, what will become o’ us when ye gang awa? what will we do whan ye are gane?” Truly, I feel that I do not deserve the poor maiden’s gratitude, for of late I fear that I have neglected her old mother. I told her that I shall leave orders that they supply them with half a pint of sweet milk daily, and a *fir* lot of good meal every month till I return ; and remembering the old jealousy of pretty Peggie, which Marjorie our dairy woman is said to cherish, I told her that I shall give my orders to May Hetley, and she may

apply to her. May remains at the Mount with her aunt, and I am sure she will attend to my orders.

Mem.—To speak to May about old Peg, and also to ask her aunt for some blanketing to send to her, and to old Goody Gordon.

My heart smote me in passing old Goody's door, when she came out and warned me not to enter, as she feared her *oe* Willie was in the fever, and had been down some days. I felt that here also I had been neglectful of my duty, and had not thought sufficiently of late of the *widow* and *fatherless*. She told me the boys were both getting stout and well, till the last week, when Willie fell ill, and she fears that Johnnie may take it next; "And then," said old Goody, wiping her eyes, "and then the Lord knows what will become of them, for I am but a *puir* silly auld woman, and no able to do muckle for the wee fatherless bairnies." I tried to comfort her, promised to send her medicines from the Mount, and to write to the doctor to give her a call. I also mentioned the matter to my nurse when visiting her, and she has great experience, and is very skilly about sickness, so she said she would go and see the little boy, and let me know what she thinks of him.

She has just been with me to tell me that she does not think that it is the fever, but in case it be, she has taken Johnnie to her own house, and has engaged a neighbour to assist old Goody in nursing Willie, I giving her the funds necessary. I have left a sum of money with her to be expended on the poor as she shall

see fit, during my absence, and to apply for more when it is done.

Walking home from the Clachan, I could not help thinking what a strange eventful month this has been to me, for it is but one month to-morrow since my birthday, long and dreary as the last fortnight has appeared. It seems as if I had lived a whole life since then. Then autumn seemed to be scarce begun, and everything around us bright and beautiful, and nature joyous as our hearts. The trees were in their gayest colours, and if they could no longer boast of the bright green of summer, they had the varied and more beautiful tints of autumn. Now they are stript and bare, and their dead leaves lie thick around, or are whirled and tossed about by the cold, chilling blasts. The sun has lost its warmth, and shines but rarely, and only to show more plainly nature's decay. The roads are heavy and wet, and at every step you crush the poor withered leaves beneath your feet. The skies, no longer brightly blue; with white fleecy clouds, like fairy boats, floating on a summer sea, now are of a dull heavy leaden colour, with piled-up stormy clouds, hurrying across the heavens before the wintry winds, and all this change in one month. If in so short a space of time the brightness of nature hath departed, who shall say that ours will not equally soon fall from us? May not this sad foreboding be the herald of worse? This separation a foretaste of a longer? I dare not pursue this idea further; and yet, sad and lonely as I now feel, how much more dreadful had been my state had Madge Murray been but ten minutes later in reaching the Mount.

In the evening my Grandmother asked me to sing to her. I seated myself at my lute, and began "The waes o' Scotland," but broke down in the middle of the first verse, for the last time I sang it it was to Charles, so my voice faltered, and then fairly gave way. My dear Grandmother seeing me thus overcome, tried to bid me be hopeful, and to comfort me, and assured me that, "Auld woman as she was, she would accompany me to Paris, and see Charley and me united; and a blythe weddin we'll have, dear burdalane—a bonnie bride and a brave bridegroom. France may weel be proud o' ye. No mony better born or bonnier, leave their 'ain country for her friendly shores, and yet she has sheltered our best and bravest in their hour o' need."

These words brought a ray of sunshine to my heart, such as has been a stranger there since Charles left me.

This sudden move to Edinburgh (for we were not to have gone for another fortnight) seems to give pleasure to none, save my *fusterer* and myself. Since *the* night he has got promotion, and whilst I live he shall never want a friend. Instead of remaining at the Mount to look after the young horses, he accompanies us to town, and is wild with the anticipation: the delights of novelty being great. I, on the contrary, am too unhappy here not to hail any change as better than remaining where *he* was. Alice, my woman, hinted several times that it would be impossible to get all things properly arranged in so short a time; but I told her she must make the best of it, so she has gone to prepare, and I am now alone, with all my sad forebodings and nameless fears.

The amusements from which I expected so much pleasure, when contemplating my introduction to the gay world, now delight me not ; and all from which I anticipated enjoyment, I now regard with utter distaste. Now that the time has really arrived for quitting Mount Baliol (it may be for ever) I feel sad and dowie, as if only now, when leaving it, I realised how very dear it is to me. How ungrateful for the happy years I have spent here, to be so ready to leave it for an unknown land. For Paris, which *may* be my future home, is totally forgotten by me. All I can recollect is a beautiful lady, who both my Grandmother and Charles assured me was his mother, and who used to load me with presents and caresses. It will therefore be quite a new land to me. Only the love that I bear him could ever induce me to leave my native country and happy home. Adieu, dear Mount Baliol ! Many a year may come and go ere I sleep again under your time-honoured roof.

EDINBURGH, OCTOBER 17, 1773.—We have arrived safely in Edinburgh, thank God, but I grieve to say we have found my dear uncle worse than we expected, so much so, that he is confined to bed ; but he says, with such an experienced nurse as his dear mother, such a willing handmaid as his little niece, and such an *amusing* companion as his nephew, who has scarce spoken two sentences since he arrived, that he will soon recover ; and sincerely do I hope he may.

It was quite dark ere we arrived, so that I could distinguish nought, and was thankful when we drove into

the court-yard and found Sir Richard standing at the door to bid us welcome; but there are so many changes within, that I could scarce recognise my old home. The rooms, I know, are newly furnished, but the housekeeper did so entreat of us that we would not look at them first till we had daylight, that we consented, and went and passed the evening beside my uncle. My Grandmother feeling fatigued, retired early, and I shall follow her example.

OCTOBER 18.—The rain is falling in torrents. My Grandmother still feeling fatigued with her journey did not rise to breakfast. I wished to remain with her, but she insisted that I should accompany my brother to the church in Carrubber's-close, which is no great distance from this. On my return I found her much rested, and sitting with my uncle. I read the evening service to them. She did not leave his room, so my dear brother and I were alone at dinner, which he ordered to be served in the small parlour.

OCTOBER 19.—My dear Grandmother is better, and was able to be down-stairs to breakfast. Immediately after, the housekeeper entered, and told us that the rooms were now ready for our inspection when we chose. Sir Richard offered his arm to the dear old lady, and preceded by the housekeeper, we went first to the dining-room, where we found Howison and my brother's *body-servant*, Beauffet, in attendance. Compared to the large dining-hall at the Mount, it is certainly small in size, but it is handsomely furnished with hangings of Lyons silk, of a deep crimson. Howison told us that "certainly it was naething in size to compeer wi the

ane at the Mount, but he thoct he could manage to dine thretty in it; and in a toun they maunna expect lairge pairties like what we gie them in the country; and them that are na satisfied wi the first, may stay at hame the second, and mak mair room for their neebors." My brother assured him that he doubted not that it would hold a sufficient number, and very soon he hoped to make the experiment.

On the walls hang the portraits of several of our ancestors. I was glad to see them again, and felt as if meeting with old friends, so well did I know them. One in especial, the picture of Bonny Bernard Bethune, which, to my childish fancy, seemed ever to follow me with its eyes, and from whatever part of the room I looked at it, there were those bright blue eyes fixed on me, till I was almost persuaded it must be alive, and used to dread doing aught that was wrong, feeling assured that Bonny Bernard saw me. Near the dining-room is my brother's morning room. The finishing of it has been deferred till he could superintend it in person; it is not yet ready for our inspection, consequently it we saw not. We then went up-stairs to the drawing-room. It is very large and handsome, and beautifully furnished with pale-blue satin damask. There are several mirrors in it, larger than any I ever saw elsewhere. Near it is a small sitting-room; and opening off it, the room that is to be my bedroom. They are both fitted up in the loveliest manner that can be; my *boudoir*, he tells me, is a copy of one he admired much when in Paris.

"And now you are going to leave me, and will con-

demn my clumsy copy when you see the original," he said, raising my hand to his lips.

"Ah, never! dear brother," I replied. "The inferiority will be in its occupant—nothing could be more lovely than this."

"I am glad that you like it; believe me that was my chief care;" we then passed on to see the other rooms.

I have just returned from an interview with my uncle. It has been painful, and far from satisfactory. He disapproves of my engagement with Charles, and will not hear of my going abroad. In vain he tried to persuade me to give it up. I ended as I began, by telling him that nothing shall ever induce me to do so: that I regretted not having his approval, but that both my Grandmother and brother had sanctioned our engagement.

"Yes," he said, "a pretty like thing. You, Martha Baliol, one of the best born, best *tochered* lasses in the country, to have engaged yourself before you are seventeen to a young fellow with ne'er a cross in his pocket to keep the devil from dancing in it. I pass over the fact that he dare na live in his own country, for that has been the fate o' many a better man; but if my mother, who I verily believe would sell every acre of Lincluden for Charley and his men, if ahe and Sir Richard, who ought to have more sense, if they have allowed you to get entangled with a handsome, young, penniless boy, ye need na think, dear niece, that Bernard Bethune will allow his heiress to throw herself away thus, and get engaged to a foreigner (and Charles

Ratcliff is now nothing else), ere she has seen any o' the bonnie lads o' her ain countrie."

"Dear uncle, I can but say that of all the world Lord Derwentwater would have been my choice. In our infancy it was thus planned for us, and *I* at least shall never change."

"Wait a little—wait, and see."

"I may wait a little, as I am unwilling altogether to go against your wishes; but believe me, years will only strengthen my determination. If I do not marry Lord Derwentwater, I shall go unwed to the grave; for believe me I *shall* never, I *can* never change."

My uncle seeing me thus resolute, has agreed to this plan: that if, a year from this date, we are both of the same mind, then he may consent to our marriage. In the mean time either is free to make another choice. This on my part I would not at first consent to, but he was resolute that unless I did so he would at once and for ever forbid our union, so all unwillingly I was obliged to agree; but I was equally resolute that I was to be allowed to write to Charles, and say, that this was my uncle's command, and not my wish; and also that I should mention, that though my uncle insisted there was to be no engagement between us, and although I should look upon him as free, I should consider myself as much his as I was the night we parted.

My uncle was most unwilling to allow me to write thus; but seeing that better might not be, with an ill grace he consented that my letter to this effect shall be enclosed in the one he sends to Charles. A *year* will

pass, however slowly time may seem to drag along, and then, please God, we shall meet, never again to part. My brother tells me that he was as much lectured and advised as if *he* wished to marry Charles. "But you know, dearest Mattie," he said, "it is never lost that a friend gets, and I am quite content to get the lecture, so be that you get your own way; so cheer up, dear girl, and when this plaguy fall is got the better of, my uncle will be in such good humour that he will shorten the time by half, and we shall hail you as countess ere the merry month of May. Meanwhile, there is a card requesting us to attend a Halloween party at the Douglas's, and there I shall burn* you and Derwent, and drink deep to a merry meeting ere long;" and so saying, he left me.

I had no wish to accept of this invitation, but my uncle insists that I am to visit as was intended, and has requested that "*my entanglement*," as he calls my engagement with Charles, be mentioned to none; and to that I have agreed most willingly, for I think on these subjects the less said the better, so after a little demur I agreed to go, and soon after Lady Douglas and her two daughters called on us. They heard yesterday that we had come to town, and had sent their invitation thus early on purpose to secure us.

Jane Douglas told me, during the visit, that her cousin, Ellen Murray Kilmaine, is to spend the winter

* In Scotland it is still the custom to burn nuts on All Hallow's Eve. Naming two nuts after any couple supposed to be attached to each other (or the reverse), they are put into the fire, and, from the manner in which they burn, auguries are drawn as to the future fate of the pair alluded to.

with them, and that James Murray is in despair, for the Græmes are not to be in Edinburgh, as Mr. Græme is not very well, so they have determined to remain at the Knowe.

I no sooner heard this than I resolved to ask my dear Grandmother to invite Lucy to spend the winter with us ; and I am glad to say that she has done so ; has begged Mrs. Græme to let her come as soon as possible, and has promised to send half-way to meet her. My acquaintance, Mr. Garden, called, but my brother being out, and my uncle confined to bed, he did not present himself ; a matter which caused me no regret, though my Grandmother avers that she would like to see this young man, of whom her son Bernard is so fond.

In the evening, when we were by ourselves, I mentioned to my brother what Jane Douglas had told me about Ellen Murray, and what my Grandmother had written about Lucy Græme.

"In both events I am, of course, supposed to be deeply concerned for self and friend," was his gay answer.

"And are you not?" I inquired.

"In good sooth, not I. Miss Murray I consider the loveliest girl I ever saw, not even excepting your pet Lucy Græme, who, to my taste, is a trifle too sweet—too much like *eau sucrée*. May I be forgiven for venturing to say so of one whom you delight to honour ; but for my part I like a dash of spirit."

"Miss Murray I'm sure has that."

"Madge Murray I *know* has that," was his answer; and then he added, "I wonder where the deuce she can be all this time?"

"She is at the Hall," I replied.

"At the Hall! Why did you not tell me sooner? Have you seen her?"

"Yes, and no. I saw her, but she saw not me?"

"My dear sister, you look so grave I scarce know what to think. Between us, where Madge is concerned, there need be no secrets. Tell me at once what you saw?"

I did so. I told him word for word what I heard. I told him exactly what I saw, for I thought best that there should be no concealment; that he should know the worst that I had to tell, and then judge for himself. When I told him that her companion in that interview was a common peasant, he started up, and exclaimed:

"A peasant! Madge Murray kneeling at the feet of any man—much more a common peasant: dear Martha, it cannot be. Had he been her own equal I should have been doubtful, but a common peasant! Martha, you must be mistaken."

"Indeed I am not, Richard: unfortunately, I saw and heard too well."

"But, my dear girl, I tell you you are, and must be mistaken. I have known Madge longer, and I am sure I know her better, than you do, and I tell you on the face of God's earth there does not step a prouder girl than Madge Murray. She may do, she does, many a foolish thing, many a one that, for her own sake, I regret, but that she would, for one instant, stoop to notice

one beneath her!—My life on it she is incapable of such a thing. I stake my honour on it, she is as free from such a fault as you, my own sister, are. Madge Murray address a peasant in endearing tones—how little you know her!"

"But, dear Richard, I both saw and heard."

"And I tell you, sister mine, both eyes and ears have deceived you. Unfortunately, I cannot leave my uncle, else I would this instant start for the Hall, tell Madge what you saw and heard, and my life for it I would bring back a complete refutation."

"And if you did not?"

"If I did not!" and in a sad, grave tone, he continued—"if I did not, Martha, you would probably never see me again, for I should at once volunteer and go abroad; and surely some bullet would reach the heart which the girl I loved and trusted had so sorely grieved."

"Dear brother, how gladly I shall acknowledge my mistake! It pains me, no less than it would you, to believe Madge guilty."

"Then do not believe it, dear Martha. Trust me when I assure you that you are mistaken. The moment I can leave my uncle I will hasten to her; till then, dear girl, try to believe, as I do, that you were mistaken—that Madge is all we ever took her to be."

It is difficult to believe that I have been mistaken in all I have heard and seen, yet for Richard's sake I will strive to think so; and when I remember all that I owe to Madge for saving Charles, I feel that there is little I could not forgive her.

CHAPTER XII.

OCTOBER 31. ALLHALLOW EVE.—Mine honoured uncle has had a relapse, but is now so much better that we are quite at ease about him, and he hopes to be out again soon. Dear Lucy Græme arrived two days ago, and, if possible, is more lovely than ever. She accompanies us to-night to Lady Douglas's. My brother has never been able to leave my uncle to put in execution his plan of going to the Hall, and, as if by mutual consent, the matter has been alluded to by neither. I do my best to think I was mistaken, but—but there comes Alice to tell me it is time I were preparing for this my first appearance at an Edinburgh party.

We found, on entering, most of the guests assembled—a few of them I had seen before. I did remark that the faintest shade of colour tinted the alabaster skin of Miss Murray, when my brother went up and accosted her, and I could not but marvel, that near such beauty and elegance, Madge was still remembered. She crossed the room to speak to my Grandmother, but of me she took but little notice—merely expressed a hope that I had been well since last she saw me. Her brother's

delight at meeting Lucy Græme was evident to all, for till now he knew not that she had come to Edinburgh. Lucy received him so quietly, that even I, who know her so well, cannot tell whether she was pleased, or even if she perceive the attention that he pays her.

Seated near Lady Douglas was a lady, whose face seemed familiar to me, although her name I knew not. She went and spoke to my Grandmother, and then crossed the room to the window in which Lucy and I were seated.

"So you do not recognise me, cousin?" she said.

I owned that my memory was in fault.

"Have you forgotten Marion Hunter?"

"Oh no!" I replied, at once recalling her to my mind, and taking her proffered hand.

"I easily recognised Lady Lincluden, but never dreamt that in you I beheld the little fairy child I used to carry in my arms a few years ago. I must make you acquainted with your cousins."

"Are they here?" I inquired.

"Yes, those two in blue, standing near their friend Ellen Murray;" and she directed my attention towards two handsome, proud-looking girls, with whose appearance I had been struck on entering the room. "And that," she continued, "is my eldest son, standing near the tall man."

"Dressed in blue?" I inquired.

"Oh no! that is Sholto Douglas. Poor Robin does not boast of such beauty—he is a true Murray. Ah! he looks this way." She made a sign to him. He crossed the room to where we were. He certainly was

not handsome, as his sisters were, but he was like a gentleman—somewhat like the Murrays—a little of their clever look.

“Robin,” said his mother—“Robin, this is your cousin, Martha Baliol, of whom you have heard me talk so often; although, unfortunately, of late we have met but seldom. I hope that may now be amended, as Lady Lincluden tells me you mean to pass this winter in Edinburgh. Go for Marion and Barbara, that I may make them acquainted with their cousin.”

Mr. Hunter expressed the pleasure it gave him to make my acquaintance, and then went for his sisters. They appeared to be not over well pleased at being interrupted; but as their mother was waiting them, they were obliged to obey, and so they crossed the room, but not alone, Mr. Garden being in their train.

“My dears,” said Mrs. Hunter, “this is your cousin, Martha Baliol.” We curtseyed to each other, but they did no more, and I was too nervous to make the first move towards intimacy, and so we were all very stiff and formal, and I was exceedingly uncomfortable, when to my great delight my dear brother joined us, and his easy manner at once thawed the ice. The Miss Hunters actually smiled, and said they were happy to make our acquaintance; and then their mother sent them back to Miss Murray, my brother and Mr. Garden escorting them, whilst she and her son remained with us.

I explained to Lucy who Mrs. Hunter was—the sister of Mr. Murray of Ashton, but she is several years older than her brother, and by a former marriage. Her husband, Hunter of the Grange, has been blamed,

whether justly or not I will not say, for having betrayed his brother-in-law. This at least *is* certain, that the secretary was at the Grange the night he was captured; and although the story is now never alluded to, I once heard my Grandmother say that it was as much to spite Grange, as it was to save his own life, that made the secretary act as he had done, because Mrs. Hunter being next in the succession, it was thought that her husband, having been true to the Hanoverians, would manage to secure the reversion of Ashton to her; and this I know, that since then the Ashtons have never spoken to the Grange family.

Mrs. Hunter in a slight degree resembles Madge—at least so I think; but Richard is indignant with me when I say so, and vows that resemblance there is none; and he declares the daughters are exactly what Madge describes them to be—*proud peats*. We both like the brother the best, and my uncle says that he has some of the ability, and none of the eccentricity, of his uncle Ashton. Like most young lairds, Mr. Hunter is at the bar; indeed, my brother is almost the only one who, heir to a fine property, has been allowed to follow the bent of his own inclination, and choose the profession of arms.

When Mrs. Hunter left me, and went to sit near my Grandmother, her son still remained beside me, and I, being a stranger to most of those present, in a gay and lively manner, which reminded me of Madge, he told me their names and histories, but he made no allusion to her, though he listened attentively when Kilmaine, who was in close conversation with Lucy, took the oppor-

tunity of a pause to ask me tidings of my cousin, Miss Murray.

Soon after, Jane Douglas came to me with a bag in her hand, in which, written on scraps of paper, were the names of all the bachelors present, and we were each to draw one, somewhat in the fashion of drawing valentines, and to burn a nut with whomsoever we might draw. Why Jane came first to me I cannot tell, but so it was. I drew, and lo! it was my brother's name; whereat they all exclaimed loudly, and protested that I must draw again; this, I said, I had no wish to do, being perfectly satisfied. Mr. Garden, who was assisting Jane, made some silly speech about my cruelty in denying any one a chance of the honour; and my kinsman, Robin Hunter, declared that I esteemed them all unworthy of it; so, to avoid any more words, I drew again, and this time Sir Archibald Primrose fell to my lot, which pleased me, I dare say, more than it did him. It pleased me, because I know him better than any who were present; but I dare say he regretted that all chance was now over of his being drawn by Miss Murray, whom he so evidently admires. My brother fell to the lot of Marion Hunter, whilst Miss Murray drew Mr. Garden; the others I forget, save two. From the laughing amongst them, when Barbara Hunter drew Mr. Elliot, the tall man, I saw there was some jest, better known to them than to me; and the look which Kilmaine gave Jane, when Lucy drew his name, convinced me that something more than blind chance had guided the choice.

I blazed away very fiercely, but Sir Archibald never

caught fire—merely smoked a little, and then rolled out of the grate, and fell ignobly on the hearthstone, and there remained; whilst my brother, so far from returning Miss Hunter's flame, with a loud report flew from her side, and fell at Miss Murray's feet, who, with Mr. Garden, was standing near, preparatory to trying their fate. She, blushing, picked up the nut, and made as though she would restore it to its place beside Miss Hunter's.

"You see, Miss Hunter," Sir Richard said, "I am unworthy of further notice."

"On the contrary, your extreme candour is the greatest recommendation. We must all bow to Ellen Murray," she replied, gaily.

He returned no answer to this sally, but crossing to where Miss Murray stood, he said: "Since I cannot appreciate Miss Hunter, I am unworthy of all further notice;" and taking the nut which had occasioned the discussion, he dropt it into the centre of the fire, and then turning to Sir Archibald, he jestingly took him to account for his unmannerly desertion of me. Sir Archibald replied that my brother ought to be the last to accuse him, for whilst he (Sir Archibald) was lamenting his conduct in dust and ashes, my brother had contrived to throw himself at Miss Murray's feet.

NOVEMBER 5.—I have seen Madge, and yet I have nothing—literally nothing—to tell. I was seated alone in my boudoir. The days are now short, and it was getting too dark to read; and the candles not being lit, I was gazing intently on the fire, tracing towers and tented plains in its glowing embers, and thinking on

"him that's far awa," when the door opened, and Madge stood before me. At the sight of her all my resentment, all my suspicions, vanished. I only saw her who, by her courage, had saved Charles; and springing up, I flung my arms round her, and exclaimed:

"Madge, dear Madge! have we at last met."

At first she appeared slightly agitated, but she has such command over herself, that in one instant, as it were, she was calm and composed, as she usually is, and said:

"Have you heard lately from France? What are your plans—do you join Lord Derwentwater soon?"

"Alas, no!" and then I told her the plan which my uncle had insisted on my agreeing to.

"Then, of course, you will be glad to write to him. I know of a safe opportunity—one who will take letter, parcel, anything—yourself, for that matter. Address yourself to the care of Lord Derwentwater; mark *single* on your back, and I can promise you shall reach him in safety."

"Ah, would I could! but your friend will take a letter?" I said, eagerly.

"*My friend!* The worst friend I ever had in my life is the bearer of your letter; but *it* will be safe, that I can promise. Send it to me by eight—or, stay, I shall call for it."

"Can you not remain with us?"

"Impossible! I have so much to do. The fact is, dear cousin, *I* am the messenger."

"You, Madge! you!" I repeated, in amazement.

"Yes!" she replied, laughing. "Important affairs

require my presence in Paris. A sword knot, or a something which cannot be settled without me. I shall more than likely see Lord Derwentwater; and, therefore, I determined to see you ere I went. That alone has brought me to Edinburgh, otherwise I had been in Newcastle."

"And your father—where is he, and Harry? Do they accompany you?"

"Which question am I to answer first?" she replied, gaily. "My father is now at Ashton. I cannot describe to you the depression of spirit that the air of this town gives me. To him it would be worse: if I, a child in years, can remember so well the last time we were here with the Prince—what must he not do. I hope he is at Ashton. Harry is somewhere in this house; I told Howison to give him his dinner whilst I sat with you. *He accompanies me.*"

I was just about to ask her what took her abroad, but, as if she guessed my intention, she got up hastily, and said:

"And now, adieu! I shall return for Harry and your letter; nay, if you like, I shall run off with yourself."

"Can you not remain here?"

"My dear child! do you fancy that you are the only one who has friends in France? There are several others whom I must see ere I leave to-night, each of whom will have a message or missive to send to them that are owre the water, and each will think theirs the most important. Rest satisfied you have been the first, and shall be the last that I see ere I leave."

"But do you go alone these errant ways? Could I not accompany you, or a servant?"

"A servant, dear Martha, what! that he might prate to all that Miss Murray had been foregathering wi Jacobites, and have people smelling treason. No, indeed, I am not so foolishly afraid of myself."

"Take me then, dear Madge, you can have no fear of me;" for I could not but be struck with Madge's utter indifference to her own safety, when likely to endanger others.

"You, my *burdalane*, you! and have all the gay gallants of the town dogging my steps to see with whom Miss Baliol wanders so late at e'en. Rest you, fair cousin, I mean to go alone for two reasons: first, because you will spend your time more profitably and more pleasantly in writing to Lord Derwentwater; and next, because I care not to have my steps followed by Francie Garden or Robin Hunter, or any of your admirers."

"And unfortunately Richard dines out, or he had been your squire."

"So Howison told me when I asked if you had dined. He said, 'Sir Richard was dining wi a wheen *ink-skitters* and bletherin fules,' as he irreverently terms writers and advocates; and now adieu," and waiting for no answer, Madge left me.

I ran immediately to tell my Grandmother the strange news, and her repeated question, "What in a' the world can take that puir lassie Madge to Paris?" first awoke in me the idea of how strange, how passing strange her flight was, which in the hurry and surprise

of seeing her, I had not thought so much about. But I left her to express her surprise to Lucy Græme, for I wished to go and hold communion with Charles, and when hurrying to do so, the thought struck me that Sir Richard would be in despair if Madge went to Paris, and he not to see her, so I hastened to the dining-room, and found Howison carving for Harry. I asked him if he could find his master for me.

Howison replied : "He had nae doubt but Sir Richard Baliol wad easily be fund; there were nae monie like him, a pretty man like him was aye ken-speckle." Seeing that he would not do, I told him to order Beauffet to attend me in my boudoir, and hastily wrote a few lines, saying that Madge was in Edinburgh, but was to leave us at eight of the clock; and giving this to Beauffet, I told him to contrive that my brother got it within an hour, and he would be well rewarded; and this being arranged, I told Harry to go and sit with my Grandmother and Lucy, and then I sat down to write to Charles. To write as I had never done before, for I knew that this would reach him in safety. That the words I addressed to him would meet no eye save his for whom they were intended, and I felt as I wrote that our engagement was sacred on his part as on mine, and that he was as true to me as the evening we parted—as the first hour he said he loved me.

I was in the midst of my letter when Richard entered.

"Thanks, dear sister, for your information; you see I have lost no time; but where is Madge?"

I told him that she had not returned, and then I told him that she was going to Paris.

"Going to Paris! In the name of wonder what takes her there?" he replied.

"Nay, I know not; but perhaps you may find out—I tried in vain."

"I see you are busy," he said, smiling, looking at the letter I was writing; "I shan't interrupt you. Tell Derwent to take care of Madge, or never to look me in the face again. To do everything but make love to her; I will excuse him that, as unfortunately I could not pay him off in kind. I shall go and gossip with Harry, and leave you to better company, your own bright hopes and thoughts."

I had just finished my letter when Madge entered, and now that the candles were lit, I could see (which before I did not) how wretchedly ill the poor girl looked—paler—thinner—and, oh! so different from the merry Madge who had been dancing so gaily at my birthday ball a few weeks previous.

"Have you been ill, Madge?" I said, looking anxiously at her.

"Yes, I have been indisposed as otherwise. I wrote to you that I feared I was taking the fever; they said it was not that, but I have been little up since, else I had been here ere now."

How my heart smote me. She really had been ill, and I fancying it a mere ruse, had taken no further notice of the poor girl, had not been struck by the fact that she never had written to say she was better. How differently she had acted had I been ill.

"And are you better now, dear Madge?"

"Oh, quite well; and change of air, they tell me,

will work wonders in restoring my strength." Then looking at the packet which I held in my hand she continued: "I see you have been busy, and so have I. Now tell me all that I am to say to Lord Derwentwater, and then I must hasten and say adieu to dear Grannie, for time flies fast, and I have still somewhat to do." But at that moment my Grandmother, accompanied by Lucy and Sir Richard, entered the room.

I felt as if on this meeting the future fate of my dear brother might depend, and I could have wished there had been fewer witnesses present.

If Lucy Græme be a puzzle to me, how much greater is Madge Murray. I allow that I have a sister's partiality for a dear brother, yet all must allow that for looks, manners, and personal accomplishments there are few like him, and any one might be proud of having gained his noble, trusting heart. Had Madge received him with coldness or anger, I could have understood it; had she looked ashamed at meeting him, I should not have been surprised; but no, it was the most perfect indifference. She embraced my dear Grandmother with the utmost affection, greeted Lucy kindly, and inquired for her father; and then turning to my brother, she spoke as if only now she saw him—spoke as if they were mere acquaintances, who had parted the previous day: to be sure her colour did come and go very rapidly, but that it does on the slightest, or, indeed, no occasion; her voice was as calm as possible, and everything bespoke utter and complete indifference. Harry now entered the room, and running up to Sir Richard, said eagerly:

"Cousin Dick, your bonnie whip is safe, but not here. Madge was so afraid that I might lose it that she took charge of it herself; but you will get it the first time you come to see us."

"Master Edwardes"—and here Madge looked at Lucy—"assured me that you set such a value on the whip that I feared, as the Irish say, I feared you would *break* it across Harry's shoulders if he chanced to *lose* it. I had sent it after you, but I was so engrossed by the fall of the old ash-tree the morning you left, that I could think of nothing else. Then you went to Kilmaine. I think you had left ere we heard of the fall of the ash-tree; and, have I seen you since?"

"No," said Richard quite as calmly; "no; we have not met since I rode across to see you the day I returned from Kilmaine——"

"For your riding whip I suppose?" interrupted Madge.

"Of course; but unfortunately I found that you had left home."

"But I assure you, cousin Dick, the whip is quite safe; Madge is taking capital care of it, and she will give you it again whenever you like—won't you, Madge?"

"Oh dear, yes; provided that it is neither lost nor broken in the meanwhile. But Hal, we must bethink ourselves, and remember that the steeds which convey us to night are neither so swift nor so sure as our own, and so we must say adieu. Dear Grannie, till we meet again, may uninterrupted health and happiness be yours. Martha, my wish is that you could accompany

me;" and in a whisper she added, "but though you remain here, both heart and thoughts I know are in fair Ferrol's land; dear Lucy, I shall see no face so fair as yours till I look on it again; Sir Richard, I wish you a good night's rest, and a pleasant time till we meet again," and she curtsied to him. I know not if Madge were surprised, but I certainly was, when he made her a low bow, and replied: "Miss Murray, I wish you the same, and an agreeable *compagnon du voyage*." Truly Richard knows Madge better than I do, for she gave him one of her sunny smiles, and for the moment she was like the Madge Murray of former days; but the smile soon faded. She kissed us ladies, and not a little to our surprise Harry, who ever copies her, did the same. She was leaving the room when my Grandmother laid her hand on her to detain her, and said gravely but kindly, "Madge, my bairn—afore ye leave I want to say a word to you. I dinna understand this matter in the least. What do ye in France, far frae yer friends and them that loe ye best? Why do ye travel thus lonely and unprotected? It's no fitting for you. It's no seemly that your dear mother's child should be exposed thus—Madge, dawtie, it isna right. Does Ashton—does your father approve o' this!"

There was a dead silence. Lucy Græme was kindly occupying herself with Harry, whilst my Grandmother spoke thus to his sister; Richard and I looked attentively at her. I knew how much depended on her answer. She paused a moment—a burning blush suffused her face, and she cast down her eyes; then raising them with her own proud look, she replied:

"The truth is, my father does not know about the matter; he was from home, and my resolution was sudden—as strange. But I go neither alone nor unprotected. I can explain nothing—give you no reason for what I do; and all that I can hope is, that you will judge of me charitably; and if I err, that you will try to forgive me. Farewell, dear Grannie! and if we should never meet again, let me depart with your blessing;" and Madge knelt at her feet.

My Grandmother paused an instant, as if undecided how to act. Madge rose, and sighing deeply, raised my Grandmother's hand to her lips, and without another word left the room—Richard and I following her downstairs.

"Madge," I said, "dear Madge, will you not trust us: will you tell us nothing?"

"I *can* tell you nothing," she replied, in a more hasty tone than I had ever known her use to me.

"What now?" she exclaimed, observing Sir Richard putting on his cloak. "What now? Harry is sufficient escort."

"Oh, more than enough," said Richard, quietly; "and as our road lies together, I mean him to escort me also."

"Nay, believe me, *our* ways lie wide apart."

"But not so far apart but they meet at last, as two lines from opposite sides of a circle meet in the centre," Richard replied, in an earnest tone.

"Only to cross each other," she answered, sadly; and then, after a moment, in a gayer tone: "Nevertheless, cousin, be it as you will, I have no time to argue the

matter." It was the first time to-night she had thus addressed him. She then departed, Sir Richard and Harry bearing her company.

"Has Sir Richard gane wi her?" said my Grandmother, the moment I entered the room.

"Yes, he has."

"I'm blythe to hear it! I am truly thankful to hear it! Richard has mair to say wi Madge than any other, and he may hear somewhat from her. Poor Madge, she is a warm-hearted lassie, wha never thinks o' hersel when she can serve a friend; but I like not that a gentlewoman like Madge should go alane to France, for poor Harry is waur than nobody, and surely no protection, and it doesna look weel. Madge is far owre independent, and yet I like the lassie, spite o' her strange ways; I am sure she has a true heart, and it grieves mine sadly to think I let the bairn leave me without my blessing, and her kneeling at my feet. God for ever bless her, and keep her from all evil. There are few in this world that like her as I do, though I grieve owre her faults and waywardness."

"Did you not think her looking ill?" I said to Lucy.

"Is she? I did not observe it," she replied.

"I wish Sir Richard wad return, and tell me about her. Ye are sure he gaed wi her?"

"Quite sure."

"And how very good-natured of him," said Lucy, in the same breath. "They seem never to meet but they quarrel."

"Bairn, ye ken little about the heart o' man," my Grandmother remarked, aside.

Lucy heard her not, but continued: "Jane Douglas once said that *Mad. Murray* was the only rival *Nell Murray* need dread; but I think she and Sir Richard never cease turning each other into ridicule, and no one can like that. For my part, I never know whether she is laughing at me or not; and of the two, I feel most at ease with Harry—he is so very good-natured, poor boy."

Lucy evidently had no idea how matters stood, and I resolved not to enlighten her. My Grandmother frequently repeated:

"I wish Sir Richard wad return; where can he hae gane?"

We sat late, expecting him in vain, and then we retired, but rest I could not, for many a strange and wild thought was in my head that night; and Richard's words rang in my ears, when I asked him, if he could bring no refutation of what I had seen, what he would do? And sad and weary the night wore away. Towards morning I fell asleep, but strange wild dreams haunted my pillow, and unrefreshed I arose.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOVEMBER 6.—On entering the breakfast-room this morning, to my delight I found my brother there before me.

"You were late yestreen, Sir Richard," my Grandmother was saying, "and I wanted particularly to see you; where did you part wi that poor lassie, Madge? I declare I couldna sleep for thinking o' her, and for blaming myself for unkindness to a motherless girl; but I thocht, Richard, that ye would hae mair sense than I had, and see that she was fitly attended."

"Oh, so she is—her old nurse and the butler accompany her, and at Newcastle she is joined by Æneas Maclean's wife, who has been in Scotland this summer, and is now returning to her husband," was my brother's reply.

"But, Richard, did Madge say nothing? Did she give no reason for such a strange and sudden journey? Did she not offer any explanation?" said my poor Grandmother, in despair.

"Indeed I never asked her. I was satisfied there

was some good reason, and as she said she *could* not tell you, I was certain she *would* not tell me."

Immediately after breakfast my brother rose, and gave me a look to follow him. I did so. We proceeded to my boudoir, and shutting the door of it, he said to me:

"Martha, do you remember when you told me of that scene you had witnessed at the Hall, that I asserted that whenever I saw Madge, that I would be able to prove to you that you had been mistaken; or if not, that I would leave this country, and never see her again."

"I do," I replied, trembling for what I was next to hear.

"Well, I have seen Madge—I bring you *no* refutation of the story, and I am firmly as ever convinced of her innocence."

"Thank Heaven that you are so," was my unfeigned reply.

"Yes, as firmly as ever."

"Who then was it that I saw with her?"

"I cannot tell, because I never asked her! When we left this last night we walked on for some time in silence—probably both occupied with the same thoughts. At last I said: 'Madge, I know you are angry with me, and perhaps you have some cause to be so, and perhaps I have some excuse for acting as I did—shall I speak to you unreservedly?' She replied, 'Yes, unreservedly—or not at all.' 'Very well,' I said; 'you were annoyed at my sudden departure from the Hall—you are angry that, from you, I went direct to

Kilmaine. Oh; of course it is nothing to you where I go; I need not fancy that you value me enough to think about the matter. I know you are thinking that; are you not?" I said. "Something in that style," she replied, laughing that I had guessed her thoughts so well. "Well," I said, "I own I was wrong to start off without first seeing you; but then, Madge, I had some excuse for doing so." "What?" "Well, I saw something the previous night that I know it was never meant I should——" "And that was," she said, seeing that I paused. "You conducting a stranger to the library in the middle of the night, and your father from home." She did start then, and for a moment she did not reply. "You saw that?" she said at last. "Yes, Madge, I did." "And who else saw me?" "Martha did." "And did you hear anything?" I repeated as nearly as I remembered what I had heard, and then added: "Well, Madge, what have you to say? had I no excuse?" "None!" she replied, indignantly; "none whatever! I acknowledge the truth of every word you say. You *did* see me leading a stranger to my father's library, knowing him to be absent; but if *you* consider that to be any excuse for your conduct, know that *I* look upon it as none! Martha's coldness I excuse and forgive; but that you, Richard, my own cousin, that you should have acted as you did, cuts me to the heart. I repeat, every word that you have said is true. You may hear stranger tales than that of me; they may be equally true; but here we part—and for ever—if you are to plead them as an excuse for any cessation of the friendship that has ever been between us. No; not one step farther do you

accompany me till you have made up your mind. You must either have no suspicions of me, hear what you may; or we part here, and for ever.' 'And you neither deny, nor explain what I saw?' 'I do not.' 'And yet you expect me to act as if I had never seen it.' 'I do!' was her proud answer. 'Then by Heaven, Madge, you have your wish. I know you too well, Madge, not to know that, did the slightest shadow of wrong attach to you, you would be the first to break off our friendship, since you will give it no dearer name—and this believe, I'll doubt the whole world, sooner than doubt you, my dear cousin.'"

Richard ceased speaking, and for some moments I could say nothing.

"And what do you think?" I said, at last.

"Think! why I think that, if possible, I like her better than ever—I like her bold spirit that disdains any explanation, and dares me to leave her. I am as firmly convinced of her innocence as it is possible for man to be; but I do not expect, only hope, that you will be of my opinion."

"And what did she say of what I told you?"

"Nothing! for the best of all reasons, because I never asked her. I told her I was certain she was innocent, and I wished to know nothing till she chooses (should she ever do so) to explain all. I may have been a fool to act thus; but I do not regret it."

"And did Madge say nothing more?"

"Nothing whatever. In fact, as if by mutual consent, the subject was instantly changed, and she seemed to think my trust and confidence deserved some reward,

for I never knew her so fascinating; indeed, when she chooses to be agreeable, not many can be more so, and last night she was perfectly irresistible."

"And do you know nothing of the cause of this hurried journey to France?"

"Absolutely nothing! except, indeed, that she will not see her favourite Uncle Dr. Cameron there—I had not forgot that he was in Paris; for I said that of course he would meet her, and take care of her; and she told me at once that he would not; so all that I could do, was to make her promise to let us know if she got safely there, and to be sure to come to us on her return, be it when it may."

My brother left me two hours ago, and here I have remained ever since. I have written down our strange conversation, and have been thinking on the diversities of character. That which in one would excite wrath and indignation, in another increases the love and admiration already felt. Had any one but Madge acted as she has done, I am certain he would have felt the deepest resentment; yet, in her case, it has heightened that nameless charm about her, which he declares to be irresistible. She explains nothing—denies nothing; and, as he says, dares him to leave her; and he forgives her all, in the face of the evidence of his own senses against her—believes all, asks no questions, and loves her more devotedly than before, without even a promise of her love in return. And yet withal he looks so happy, that I cannot, I have not the heart to attempt any warning, any entreaty to pause, ere he venture thus to hazard all on one throw. Oh Madge!

Madge ! surely you could not deceive such a noble, trusting heart as his—and yet—what do I say—did I not hear her ? Did I not see her kneeling at the feet of another man—and my brother to know this, and yet to act as he has done. Surely, as my Grandmother says, she must have cast the *glamour* owre him. Such love as this, is indeed blind.

NOVEMBER 25.—Yesterday, we had our first dinner party. It was a small one, not above eighteen, counting ourselves, being present, nevertheless the guests seemed to be well pleased, and remained till it was late. I was seated beside a gentleman whose name I did not hear, and whom I had never seen before. He thought it his duty, for pleasure it could not be, to pay me the most extravagant compliments, which I neither desired, nor deserved, so at last I turned my back on him and addressed my conversation during the rest of the dinner to Sir Archibald Primrose, whom I find, upon further acquaintance, to be a man of much sense, and of no small powers of entertainment: he is more the friend of my uncle than of my brother, being considerably older than the latter, and, as I can easily see, that he is attached to Miss Murray, and only waits a favourable opportunity to offer himself for her acceptance, I feel more at ease with him than with my uncle's favourite, Mr. Garden, or indeed, than even with my cousin Robin Hunter. To them I am stiff and formal, as I think a young woman, affianced to one man, cannot be too circumspect or reserved in her manner of receiving any attention from others. Sir Archibald frequently speaks to me of Charles—he evidently knows

not the terms on which we stand to each other—and if he knows, as I think he must, his real rank and title, he is careful never to mention him by them: I have much ado to prevent myself from doing so, but for many reasons we judge it best, so I manage to style him Mr. Edwardes, and not Charles, or Lord Derwentwater, as of late has been my habit.

Kilmaine was of the party, and never left Lucy's side; indeed, to such a pitch did he carry his attentions to her, that when the guests were gone (Lucy not being present), my Grandmother told my brother that as long as Lucy is here she will not again ask Kilmaine, for he must make up his mind one way or other, as nothing is so prejudicial to a young woman as being surrounded by *danglers*.

"Faith!" replied my brother, "Kilmaine's mind, I take it, has been made up long ago, but he fears to tell it till Lucy gives him a little more encouragement."

"Encouragement, Richard! What would the man have? He is no that blate if he expect a young woman like Lucy Græme to take the smallest notice o' him one way or other till he speak out, and maybe no then till she has tried his temper a wee. She listens to him, and that was deemed encouragement enow in my day; and when he asks her if she will take him for better for worse, it will be time enough then to gie him encouragement to persevere. It would be it, indeed, if a young maiden had to gie courage to a bashfu wooer."

In the midst of my Grandmother's speech Lucy entered, so the conversation was stayed. She looked so radiantly lovely, that more than ever I was convinced

that Love is blind. Who could see Lucy and not wish to call her his own? Yet there was my brother had not one thought to bestow on her when near Madge; and Charles, who had seen Lucy ere we met this last time, it was to her friend, and not to her transcendent charms, that he had surrendered his heart. Then truly may we, less favoured by Nature, say "the power of beauty is not unlimited." Yet who does not long for it more than any other gift—save, if we may believe her, Madge Murray, who declares that she values *wit* more than beauty! And were she ever in the novel position of having made a conquest, she had rather owe it to her tongue than her eyes. "For the brightest eyes," she says, "are either black or blue, and once seen, you find no change, save to green-eyed jealousy, which might be considered no improvement; but *wit* is like the diamond, flashing a thousand varied colours, and never twice the same." For my part, I had rather have Lucy's beauty than Madge's wit; yet it was her woman's wit that saved a life dearer to me than my own, for what were mine without it.

My brother, who has been sitting with me, tells me that my neighbour at dinner yesterday was Mr. Burnett of Monboddoo, celebrated for his eccentricities, and his utter indifference to ladies' society, and that I knew not how highly I was favoured when he addressed a remark, much more a compliment, to me. He tells me that some of the wits have composed a song on the *Ridotto*, now so much in vogue, in which some notice is taken of most of the people of the day. Of Mr. Burnett it says:

"Five women about one man you see,
But alas ! for the ladies, Monboddo is he."

He also tells me that he and Mr. Garden are both considered as rising young men at the bar. It may be so: I care not, and I fancy they owe the estimation they are held in as much to their politics as to their talents.

DECEMBER 3.—My poor Diary is now sadly neglected. I have little to note down, though my time seems ever to be occupied.

To-night we are to have a large and brilliant ball, to introduce me to the Edinburgh world of fashion; but the recollection of the former ball, and those then with me, is too vivid to have much pleasure in this one. It is yet too early to commence the labours of the toilet, so I have opened my Diary to labour there, for labour it is, to record how slowly time drags on. Surely I shall soon hear from Charles. Of Madge there has been no intelligence whatever since the evening she quitted us so strangely; and my brother carefully avoids not only the mention of her name, but even to appear anxious; and yet his eager look, when a letter by any chance is brought to me, convinces me that she occupies his thoughts more than he would care to allow. If she has gone to Paris, more than ever do I wish I had accompanied her, for this separation is indeed a living death. And with my heart thus keenly alive to the memory of the past, I must go and prepare for the enjoyment (?) of the present. Alice tells me that I am at least two inches thinner of late, and that my white satin, which I wore the evening of my birthday, would not now fit me, but for that she wished me to

wear it to-night, but that I could not have done. To please my dear brother, who declares that never did I look so well as the night I wore it, I have agreed to have my picture taken in it: he wishes my picture for the hall at the Mount, and my Grandmother wishes a small miniature of me, to hang round her neck, when the original is gone. To-night I wear a blue satin hoop, with an amber-coloured lutestring petticoat, trimmed with point, and point lappets and ruffles. It is a dress of exceeding elegance, and which, I am assured by the mantua-maker, is the newest mode.

The ball is now over, and my labours are likewise at an end. Dear Charles, you need have no fear, and my uncle as little hope, that those I meet will ever supplant you. Who could compare those who surround me to you? And my uncle's words have opened my eyes, that it is to the heiress of Lincluden that so much devotion is offered, and not, as in your case, to Martha Baliol.

DECEMBER 4.—To-day arrived my long-expected letter, written on the receipt of the one my uncle sent, and no word of the one taken by Madge. This one is just what I expected from him. He urges that the year of probation be shortened, else *coûte qui coûte* he will return to Scotland, and spend the rest of it near me. My uncle may keep his broad acres, it is his niece that Charles wishes to call his own. As for our engagement, he will yield it up only with his life; he is bound to me by every tie of love and gratitude. He entreats that I will write to him immediately, because if I give him no hope of being soon in France, he will be in

Scotland ere another month be over. He writes to me from Paris, where he is visiting the Comte and Comtesse de St. Germain, and he encloses a letter to me from the Comtesse, in which she requests to know when she may expect me, as she hopes I will consider the Hôtel St. Germain my home till after my nuptials with Charles; that she is anxious to receive me as a dear sister, and wishes that her sister had as happy a fate in prospect as to be the wife of Milord Derwentwater.

I have written to both. I have entreated him to wait patiently a little longer, and all will go well; but if he love me, not to risk his life by returning to Scotland. To the Comtesse I have also written, to thank her for her kindness, which at a future time I hope to trespass on. Assured of his constancy, the time will pass, and this separation seem but as an evil dream.

My brother at first was amazed that there was neither letter nor message from Madge, till on comparing dates he declared that she could barely have reached Paris at the time Lord Derwentwater's letter left, and as he was satisfied, it fell not to me to attempt to shake such confidence as his.

DECEMBER 11.—This new style of reckoning has at least this advantage, that now we shall have two Christmases instead of one, and yet we cannot reconcile ourselves to the new one. My uncle, who has now quite recovered, vows he will keep the old one at Lincluden, and will give me and my friends a party there, if we will come so far. This we have all agreed to do: Jane Douglas, in especial, is loud in expressing the de-

light she experiences at the thoughts of going there. She accompanied us to-day when we went to make arrangements with Mr. Robertson about my first sitting for my picture, which takes place to-morrow. To-night I have a brilliant ball at Lady Clerk's before me, and the fatigue of double dressing would be too much. As I said, Jane accompanied us to Mr. Robertson's, and her remarks on the pictures of her friends were more original than flattering. Some were grinning as if at a fair; others were like churchyard monuments, &c., &c. At last she began talking of the projected party at Lincluden, which she hopes to enjoy as much as she did the one at "The Mount." "But what a pity Miss Madge Murray and Mr. Edwardes could not join this one, they were such a diversion," she rattled out. I have no doubt but that I looked greatly surprised, for she added immediately, "Oh, I don't mean anything against your cousin, but she is such a queer girl; and Mr. Edwardes, in yon fine dress of his, looked for all the world like an old picture of a cavalier that had stepped out of its frame."

"I am sure he could wish no higher compliment," I replied.

"Compliment! not at all. I tell Sholto he was the handsomest boy I ever saw, but a terrible goose."

I felt most indignant, and an angry reply rose to my lips, but I refrained, and she rattled on.

"Not that he ever spoke five words to me in his life, but he was so proud of having shot a stag, that instead of walking with the rest of us to the ruins of Baliol's tower, he went and sat in the larder to see it weighed,

as if it had been a stag of ten, stupid loon! I suppose he had never done the like before."

Remembering how very differently from what she supposed his time had been passed, I could not repress a smile, and the words

"Not harts, but hearts, the nobler prey,"

rose to my lips, and I fully agreed with my uncle in his opinion of Jane Douglas, that she is a confirmed tattler, and heeds not whether she knows aught about what she talks or not. Mr. Robertson, who had been engaged with another sitter, now came to us, and I agreed to return on the morrow. Jane said she would accompany me, but I have no wish for that, and shall contrive to avoid it.

On my way home from Lady Clerk's ball I thought my chairmen were unusually unsteady in their gait, and had Ringwood not been walking alongside, who would have seen had they been unfit for their duty, I should have been afraid of the consequences. When we arrived at Baliol's lodgings, I desired I might be set down in the court-yard, and not carried up to the entrance-hall. Great was my astonishment when I got out, to see, by the light of Ringwood's flambeau, that my kinsman, Robin Hunter, and Mr. Garden, had been my porters; but I resolved not to seem aware of the fact, so taking no notice of them, I turned to Ringwood, and said, sufficiently loud for them to hear, "Ringwood, I desire that you never allow these men to carry my chair again, they do it so vilely—pay them their hire, and never employ them again;" and waiting for no reply, I walked

up the outer stair, and desired the porter to shut the door; but ere he had time to obey, Mr. Garden had followed me, and begged that I would not be so severe on my *caddies* as never to employ them again. I replied that not only should I never employ them, but that I should never speak to either of them, if they attempted the like again; and with a formal curtesy I retired; and he, seeing that their silly prank had not advanced them in my favour, bowed in silence, and withdrew. Hearing voices in my boudoir as I passed, I opened the door, and there, to my surprise, I found my uncle seated, playing cards with a lady! The noise of opening the door made them turn round, and to my surprise I beheld Madge Murray! She flung down her cards, and ran to meet me.

"Now, Madge, do be sensible, and like yourself. Never mind Martha, but play out your hand. What have you got?" said my uncle.

"Point, quint, and quatorze! you may be sure," she replied, hurrying back to her seat; but having contrived in that instant to thrust a large packet into my hand, addressed to me by Charles. I opened it—I saw that he was well, but to read it before witnesses I could not; I must, therefore, wait till I retired, and that could not be till Lucy returned, my amateur *caddies* having outstripped her old ones. I was going to seat myself opposite to Madge, that I might watch her countenance, which I used to think I could read so easily, when I observed that Harry was also of the party. He was seated on a large settee near the window, fast asleep. I went up to him, and took his hand: he sprung up, and looking wildly around, exclaimed:

"Where am I?"

"Safe in Auld Reekie, Hal!" Madge replied.

"Why, then, I have been dreaming I thought I was going with Lord Derwentwater to see the king's stables. Do you remember, cousin, the Mr. Edwardes that we used to know? Well, he's grown Lord Derwentwater now, whose picture you have; but I knew him again quite well, though he be changed to some other body, and he took me out one day when the king hunted—oh, it was a brave sight; but our horses are better—they hadn't one there that Prince Rupert would not easily run away from, but they have such lots of *prickers*, and *huntsmen*, and *yeomen*, and dear knows what not. I was sorry I had not my bonny bugle with me, to sound a *mort*, for, cousin, I killed a boar—such a big fellow; but I brought home his tusks, and they said only the king's men may sound the horns, so it did not matter so much—and then—what more did I see, Madge?"

"The soldiers," said Madge, continuing to play.

"Oh, aye, the soldiers—his own regiment, such handsome fellows—but I told him that if they had a stiff country to cross, they had best shorten their stirrups a bit—'cause look ye, cousin," and poor Harry rambled off to discuss the merits of short and long stirrups; but I heeded him not, for I thought if I had done Madge injustice, in fancying she had not gone to Paris—might I not in another instance have done the same—these thoughts engrossed me completely till the entrance of Lucy Græme and my brother chased them away.

"So, ladye fair," he said on entering—"so you are safe here; Lady Douglas was in utter despair at the report that one of her young ladies had been forcibly carried

off by two gentlemen;" and then perceiving Madge, a gleam of intense pleasure crossed his handsome features as he advanced towards her, but she took no notice of him, but continued her game.

"That knave has cost you your game," my uncle said, as she played.

"Do you allude to cousin Dick, or the mighty *Pam*?" she said, holding out her hand to my brother, but still playing her cards.

"I mean you played badly when you led ace knave to my guarded king—I have the cards by that, and am game. And now your news, fair sirs—who has been carried off *Vi et armis*?"

My brother with much humour proceeded to tell them of my novel porters.

"My word for it," said Madge, "Robin Hunter wishes to know the weight of your purse ere he commits himself. I wonder if he thinks that you are like a Gaberlunzie wife, and carry your dower stitched into your petticoat, and thought this the surest way of knowing what you are worth? And I suppose Francie Garden, like the Turks, estimates female beauty by pounds *imperial*, as well as pounds *sterling*."

"And now, Madge," said my brother, "tell us your adventures; where all have you been? whom all have you seen? and why did you never write as you promised?"

"I have been in Paris! I have seen all who are of any note in that capital, and I wrote to my dear Grannie the day after my arrival there."

"She never got the letter, Madge," my brother exclaimed.

"Possibly not—I heard they had robbed a diligence, and my letter being the most valuable thing it contained, of course they would keep it. No, I know you never got it, for the person who was bringing it, fell sick by the way, was unable to proceed to Scotland, and returned to Paris two days before I left," said Madge, gaily.

"Well, now your adventures," Richard said, seeming, in his delight at being once more near her, to forget how late it was.

"You must imagine them to-night, kind cousin, for I only waited the return of Martha to crave the blessing of a bed—a luxury I have not even dreamt of the last three nights. We had a fearful toss crossing, and my little Flora was so terrified, that she could only rest on my knee."

"And who is little Flora?" we all exclaimed.

"My little cousin, Flora Cameron. The loveliest creature ever seen."

"The living image of what her aunt, your own mother, Madge, was at her age," my uncle quietly observed.

"She has gained dear Grannie's heart, for we arrived ere she retired," continued Madge, "and Grannie declares that I have secured a welcome in every house, when I have brought the daughter of the good Archibald Cameron to Scotland with me."

"And where is she?" I inquired.

"Oh, safe in bed, with Alice and her nurse singing her asleep, and talking over the marvels and news of the day."

"And what is the news, Madge?" said my uncle.

"You are as chary of your words to-night as a prime minister to a poor cousin seeking employment."

"Because every time I open my mouth I feel like a churchyard at midnight, and so, without further ceremony, a fair good night to all;" and Madge rose to retire.

In saying good night to my brother, I showed him the packet which I had received from Charles: he turned to Madge, and said:

"You left Derwent well?"

"Excellently well: he did commend himself to your highness, but in pity let me retire, and do you question Harry as to his whereabouts."

I was leaving the room with Lucy, but chancing to look round, I saw Madge whisper to my brother in a very earnest tone. The purport of that whisper I know not, but he made no further attempt to detain her, but merely expressed a hope that to-morrow she would be rested after her journey.

As we passed the room where little Flora was, we went to see how she fared. We found her asleep, her head resting on her little white arm, over which fell a shower of golden ringlets. Madge gently lifted her curls, to let me see how fair the face was which they shaded.

"Now go," she said, "and read your letter, and in a little I shall join you, and tell you all about Lord Derwentwater: haste away, and don't disturb Flo."

I required no second telling, but hurried away, and ordering Alice to go to bed, and not to wait for me, I sat down to the exquisite delight of reading his letter.

Alas! how little I imagined that a letter from him could have ever caused me such sorrow. It was written two days before Madge left France, as, up to that time, he was resolute to return with her to Scotland; but on that day it had been publicly announced that the king had determined to raise an army immediately, to support the heroic Queen of Hungary, instead of waiting till the spring, as had been expected. M. d'Etrées was to have the command of 80,000 of the flower of the French troops, and Comte de St. Germain was to be one of the generals under him. The *cuirassiers* were of course to be of the force; but for that he had returned to Scotland. My only rival, he assures me, is honour, and he knows that I will accede in saying—

“ I could not love you, love, so much,
Loved I not honour more.”

The campaign in all probability, he thinks, will be a short one, and be over ere the year of our probation be completed, so that when we meet, he hopes to lay a few laurels at my feet, and to have done nothing to make me blush to bear his name. He tries by every means in his power to comfort me, but comfort I can know none, for it seems as if till now I had never known misery.

I sat and cried as if my heart would break; a thousand times I mourned over my ready compliance to my uncle's will. Why had I not been more determined? Why had I not been more resolute to join him in France? Now indeed it was impossible. How long I sat thus I know not; but at length I was roused by some one knocking at the door, and Madge entered.

“ Ah !” she exclaimed, seeing me in tears, “ this was

what Lord Derwentwater feared, and I promised him to do my utmost to console you. Cheer up, Martha, and try to take comfort for his sake. For some time nothing can be done. They will march to the Rhine, encamp on its banks, and there remain; and ere the season serves for active service, Frederick may be wearied, or the brave Hungarians may have chased him home."

But all in vain her words of comfort fell on mine ear, which, she perceiving, began to tell me of her residence in Paris.

"Mde. de St. Germain, I am sure, took me for you; for no sooner did she hear that a Scottish girl was in Paris—which piece of natural history Lochiel gave her)—than she came to me, congratulated me on having gained the heart of *le brave et beau Dervent*, and insisted that I must reside in her hotel. I was obliged to enlighten her on that subject. Great was her surprise, but she was not the less kind; in fact, she was kinder, if possible, as she seemed to have a vague idea that for the sake of *le cher Dervent* I had crossed the water; and it was not till his return from Versailles that she began to have any proper idea of the matter."

Madge continued for some time talking of these kind friends, but by degrees her voice became inarticulate, then ceased altogether—her head sank down, and poor Madge was fast asleep! I then remembered, what in my selfish sorrow I had forgot, that she had said for the last three nights she had never been in bed.

"Madge—Madge, dear—go to bed now, and tell me the rest to-morrow," I said, touching her.

"Oh, never mind, I am not sleepy now," she said, awaking, and continuing an account of a review of the troops, to which she had accompanied Mde. de St. Germain; but sleep was too powerful; even her iron will could not bear up against it, and she was speedily slumbering again.

"It won't do," she exclaimed, starting up; "it won't do. My eyes are heavy, and I needs *must* sleep;" and, so saying, she shook hands with me, and left me. I observed she made no attempt to embrace me, as she was wont to do, and I almost think there is a shade of sorrow in her tone when she speaks to me; and her manner assuredly is different. I cannot help it. I must have some explanation of all I saw, ere I can be the same to her, and she has too keen feelings not to perceive the difference.

She left me, and I was alone with my sad thoughts. How they contrasted with the brilliant scene which I had so lately left! Charles exposed to all the hardships and uncertainties of a long winter campaign! Whilst I was dancing in lighted halls, surrounded by all that wealth could procure, or luxury suggest, he was encamped, or, it might be, bivouacked on the field, the moon and stars shining on his lowly couch. I read his letter again and again; each time some new danger seemed to threaten him; and that night, if ever one did, "I watered my couch with tears."

CHAPTER XIV.

DECEMBER 12.—When I entered the room this morning I found every one there before me. Little Flora was seated on Madge's knee, whilst my brother hung over the chair, and smoothed the child's golden ringlets.

"Ah, Grannie," Madge was saying, as I entered, "France is the country to live in. I was never so much made of, never so *fêted* in my life, as the short time I was there."

"And what made you return to Scotland, Madge?" my uncle inquired.

"More for the sake of those out of it than those in it," she replied gaily. "Why, it might have cost France one, if not two, of her bravest generals had I remained. M. de St. Germain offered me the command of a troop of *Voltigeurs*, if I would remain. M. de Coutades put a whole regiment of *Chasseurs* at my disposal; whilst the General d'Etrées hinted that, to induce me to remain, a vacancy would be made in the command of the *Gardes à cheval*, which I alone would be able to fill."

"And Lochiel, Madge," said Harry eagerly.

"Ah! the less said on that, Hal, the better; that was mere bribery and corruption; he offered me his regiment if I would let him have little Flo;" and she hugged the little girl to her heart, and then continued: "I accompanied M. de St. Germain to see the troops reviewed. It was the finest sight I ever saw.

"And with all this sight-seeing, did you ever see young Ratcliff?" my uncle inquired.

"Never, that I am aware of," Madge quietly replied. "But I saw Lord Derwentwater often; his regiment is considered one of the finest, and he, the handsomest man in it. Once seen, he is not likely to be forgotten."

"And how does he like the prospect of war?"

"Well—of course; he has been so successful in one *engagement* already," was Madge's ready answer.

"Does he accompany M. d'Etrées?" continued my uncle.

"Yes, he has that luck, whilst Lochiel serves under the Prince de Soubise; and he offered me his regiment in the hope that then he might volunteer into Lord Derwentwater's, as many of the Scots have done."

My dear brother here crossed the room to where I was sitting, and taking my hand, pressed it silently in his. I could not speak to him, my heart was too full.

"M. d'Etrées is considered one of the ablest generals, and never exposes his troops needlessly," he said to me.

"And for some months nothing can be done," said Madge.

"And how did you like France, Harry?" inquired my Grandmother.

"I liked it very well. Lord Derwentwater—him that used to be Master Edwardes, well, he's Lord Derwentwater now—he gave me a pair of pistols—didn't he, Madge?"

"A *couteau de chasse*—a hanger, Harry."

"Oh, aye, so it was, the day we went a hunting;" and then, turning to me, Harry continued: "And do you remember the bonnie purse you gave me my last birthday?"

I said I did.

"Well, he made me give him it in exchange for my hanger, because Madge said it would cut love; but he gave me back all my money that was in it. And who gave me the pistols, Madge?"

"Lochiel, to defend little Flo."

"So it was; well, I never laid them off all the way from France to this, for fear that any one might hurt her—but nobody tried."

"And are you sorry to return home?" said Lucy.

"I don't know—just when Madge likes. Madge, when do we return home?" he said, mistaking Lucy's inquiry.

"Not for a long time, Harry," said my brother hastily. "Not till I have shown you the sights of Auld Reekie."

"We return this afternoon, Hal; and that reminds me I have some '*honest folk*' to see first;" and Madge laughed to my uncle.

"*Honest!* Madge," he replied. "If they be *honest*

they're a devilish *cheat* ; but how came the *honest folk* across the water to part with you ; I should have thought they would have done their best to induce you to remain in *la belle France* ?"

"And how do you know that they did not ?" she quickly answered ; and then in a graver tone she continued : "Do not lay the flattering unction to your soul, that though an usurper has made them exiles they have forgot the land of their birth. No ! believe me, much as they are honoured and respected in France, there is not one of them, from Lochiel downwards, that does not envy the poorest of their *gillies*, who can fearlessly tread the heather hills of bonnie Scotland, and is not hunted like a beast of prey, as they would be, were they to follow their inclination and return to their home and country. And now, dear Grannie, may I leave Flo a little time with you ?"

"My dear bairn, sit down ; I have scarce spoken to ye yet. Sit down, and tell me about my auld friends, and aboon a' about your uncle ; how is he—does he mind us yet—I am sure he has na forgotten poor Scotland ?"

"He gives proof of that, dear Grannie, when his only child is sent to us to be brought up a true Scottish lassie."

"And himself, Madge—is he well—is he much altered, or is he like the handsome Archie Cameron he was twenty years ago ?"

Madge paused a moment, and then said : "My uncle was not in Paris when I was there ;—but I must leave you—I must indeed ; I have so much to do."

"We shall see you again, shan't we?" said my brother; "don't hurry home; stay with us till after Christmas."

"Christmas! why, on or about that day I officiate as bridesmaid to Peggie Paterson."

"So soon, Madge; the day after to-morrow!" we all exclaimed.

"Good luck! no; we hold Christmas on the 25th, as our fathers did, and not on the 14th."

"And how in the world, Madge, did ever the fair Peggie come to choose you for her bridesmaid?" said my brother.

"Not for love of me, you may believe; but one day, when she had been giving me goodly counsel and advice, and pointing out the frightful waste and extravagance at the Hall, and had improved on this matter for the space of two hours, I remarked with a deep sigh that I feared it was an idle wish, but I did wish that she had a house of her own, and then she would not have so much time to interfere in mine; whereupon she replied that the wish, perhaps, was not quite so idle as I thought or wished, but from that day forward she would concern herself no further about me, or my concerns; and I was so overcome by this awful threat, that I danced for joy, and promised to be her bridesmaid."

"Oh, fie! Madge; that's no the way to take the advice o' a friend. I am sure Peggie never interfered or gaed to the Hall but for your good," said my Grandmother.

"Like Schulenberg, 'it was for our goods, for all our goods,' that she came to the Hall, and, I assure

you, we used to think, and for our chattels too," Madge replied, laughing.

"Madge, Madge, ye are an unsatisfactory bairn, that a bodie can neither be lang pleased nor lang angry wi. Gude pity the poor man that gets you—ye will lead him a sair time."

"Amen, with all my heart; but, as I said to Peggie, it is an idle wish;" and then rising, she led the child to my Grandmother, and said to it, "Flo, you will be the best of little girls till we meet, and torment Grannie as little as possible till I return."

"But can ye no tarry wi us, Madge; what gars ye rin awa frae us a'."

"I must go, dear Grannie, indeed I must; my father is wearying for us back again;" and, looking in my Grandmother's face, she added: "Though he knew not of my departure, I do assure you he counts the hours till I return to the Hall."

"Ah! Madge, could ye no hae said that it was to bring back Archie Cameron's bairn to Scotland, and spared me mony an anxious hour."

"And had that been the reason of my hurried journey, at once I should have told you; but that was an afterthought," was Madge's fearless reply. Then, turning to my brother, she said: "Will you let Harry be with you for the next two hours; by that time I shall have seen all my friends here, and then, 'Westward, hoe!'"

"Gladly," he replied; "I have promised to buy a horse for a friend to-day, and Harry's advice and skill will be invaluable."

"Thank you, dear cousin," she said, with a beaming smile at hearing Harry's praises. "Thank you; the people I am going to see are strangers, and Harry will enjoy much more being with you;" and so saying, Madge retired.

"Lassie, lassie!" my Grandmother said, when she had left the room. "I wish a' may be right; but where there is so much concealment frae them that like you best, surely some ane maun be sair sair to blame."

"Not Madge, my word for it; whatever concealment there may be, she is not to blame," my brother warmly replied.

"She may hae nane from you, Richard," my Grandmother observed. To this he returned no answer, but asked Harry if he were ready for a ride. As I was suffering from a headache, my Grandmother proposed that I should accompany them, as the fresh breeze from the Pentlands might cure it, and give me some shade of colour ere I went to Mr. Robertson for my first sitting.

On our return we found the coach which was to convey my cousins to Ashton, waiting in the court-yard. Fearing to be too late for my appointment with Mr. Robertson, I hastened to my room to change my riding-dress, and passing through my boudoir I found Madge seated there reading. She said that my Grandmother and Lucy had taken little Flora out with them, and she was resting from her labours. She made no attempt to accompany me to my room, and feeling there is a degree of coldness and estrangement now between us, I did not ask her. Soon after I had left, my brother

entered, and though the curtain which separates the rooms was down, I heard all that passed between them.

"Harry is of opinion that the horse is sound in wind and limb, and that my friend, your cousin Robin Hunter, may purchase him with perfect safety," Richard began.

"Were I in Harry's place, it might not be so safe for your friend, my cousin Robin Hunter, to purchase a horse at my commendation; but dear Harry differs from most, in so far that his words are ever the echo of his thoughts, and never meant to conceal them," was Madge's reply.

"He seems to have enjoyed much his visit to Paris."

"And no wonder, where all were so kind to him."

"And were you never tempted to forget us, Madge? Did you never wish to remain there?"

"Never, in good sooth! As to forgetting you all, it is not from Lord Derwentwater or Loochiel that I would learn to forget Scotland."

"And those in it, Madge? Had they no place in your thoughts?"

"Truly, yes: you cannot fancy that I did not think of my dear father, though I had Harry with me. Where can Harry be?" I heard Madge move restlessly; with a woman's perception she seemed to know what was coming.

"One moment, dear Madge—you seem resolved ever to misunderstand me. You know I was not alluding to your father. You must have seen, and known, all that I have so long wished to tell you; yet when I would

have spoken, you have turned aside from the subject—the dearest of all to me.”

“And why expose yourself, and me also, Richard, to this sorrow now, when you must have seen my reason for doing so—for acting as I have done?”

“To show me there was no hope,” he said, in a sad and sorrowful tone. She returned no answer. “I have then a rival? Answer me that, dear Madge, and on my honour as a gentleman I never allude to this subject again, which, unhappily, I see distresses you so much.” Still she remained silent.

“Will you not trust me, dear Madge? I think you may. Forget all that I have now said, and look upon me merely as your friend and cousin, who would fain assist you, did he but know how.”

In a voice so tremulous and low that I could scarce hear it, and could never have recognised it as Madge’s, she replied:

“My reason for acting as I have done, Richard, is this—and if I have erred, bitterly I shall regret it. We were friends and companions in our childhood, and as such I have ever treated you, and ever shall—but I shall never leave my poor Harry: I hoped that you would understand this. Believe me, I never rated myself so highly as to think that I could gain your affections. Neither do I now think that I shall long retain them. Your kind heart has misled you, my dear cousin, and has invested me with qualities I do not possess. Believe me, it will be happier for you to forget me.”

"That I shall never do, Madge."

"Oh yes, you will ; at least, I would not that you should quite forget me ; but you will think of me as a friend only, for I shall never leave my poor Harry. The ill I have done him, I well know, I can never repair ; but as far as I can I have prevented, and shall prevent, him from feeling the difference between himself and others, and suffering for what is my doing."

"And is he my only rival ? Ah, Madge, you are silent."

"You press me hard, Richard."

"I do so—more than I am warranted. Yet, Madge, let me implore of you to be now, as you used to be in the happy days of our youth—fearless and unconstrained in your intercourse with me, ready to own the truth, right or wrong. Dear Madge, be so still, and tell me, is Harry my only rival ?"

I held my breath in anxious expectation, fearful of losing a word of Madge's answer. What was my surprise to hear her fearlessly say :

"I will be frank with you, Richard, as you deserve that I should be. Harry is your only rival ; but do not hope from that. With equal truth I tell you that I shall never leave him."

"Nor shall I ever ask you, Madge, my own Madge, to do so—a thousand thanks for your frankness—could you but know the happiness your words have given me. Leave Harry ! no, good sooth ; blighted be my hopes the day I ask you to do so, but why leave him ? he likes me next to yourself——"

"That I do, indeed, cousin Dick," said Harry, who, unperceived by them, had entered the room—"that I do, indeed, cousin Dick, next to Madge and papa, I like you the best, and so does Madge herself for that matter, for many a time she has told me you were the boldest rider, the best shot, and the bravest fellow on this side of the Border. Haven't you now, Madge, hey? and told me to be like you, did you not, Madge?" but Madge had made her exit, by hastily entering my room, and I had enough ado to prevent her from seeing that I also had overheard them. Had her eyes not been dimmed with tears, she must have observed my confusion, for I had not recovered my astonishment at hearing her assert to my brother, that he had no rival. "None that she dared to own," she ought to have said.

In a moment Madge had recovered from her confusion, and quietly said: "Your pardon, Martha, for my intrusion, but it must be getting late, and I wish to reach Ashton to-night. Could you direct me where I am likely to meet Grannie and Flora?"

"I think they will return immediately; my Grandmother was to accompany me at one of the clock to Mr. Robertson, the painter's, and it must be near that hour," I replied, as we both re-entered the boudoir where Richard and Harry were. Soon after Alice entered to tell us that Lady Lincluden had returned; Madge told her to order her coach to be got ready, and then proposed that we should join my Grandmother. Harry and I were walking along the passage, the others lingered behind us, and as we left the room, I heard Madge say:

"Let there be no misunderstanding between us, Richard—believe me, there is no reason to hope."

"Whilst Harry is my only rival, I shall not despair," was his answer; and I heard no more.

We found my Grandmother and the others of our party in the dining-room; Flora, loaded with every sort and kind of toy, and in great glee, but the moment Madge entered, she rushed up to her, and with eager joy offered her all the prettiest she had got.

"Oh, that is given me to bribe me to let you remain here with dear Grannie, and pretty Lucy Græme; but I fear they would spoil little Flo as her cousin Lochiel does, so I must hurry her off to the Hall—now take up all your bonnie dies." Harry went to assist the child, and we could not fail to be struck with the likeness between the two. The same faultless features—but one sad difference—the child's fair young face beaming with intelligence, contrasted painfully with poor Harry's vacant look; and yet they looked so handsome, that my Grandmother said to Madge:

"They are twa bonnie, bonnie bairns, as ye would see in a lang summer's day."

"They are, indeed, Grannie, had man not marr'd what God had made so fair," she replied, in a voice of agony.

"Who can say, Madge, that that boy may not do as much good to his fellow-men as any of us, who have not his excuse for our short comings," my uncle said, solemnly.

For a few minutes no one spoke. Harry was the first to break the silence, going up to Madge, and saying:

"Well, Madge, are you ready? we are."

"Will you not be tempted to come to us on Yule, Madge? It would only be a pleasant ride from the Hall. What say you, Harry?" said my uncle.

"No, no," Madge hastily replied, "we must be at home that day; do not ask him. It is impossible."

"But think of the novelty, Madge; a lady party at Lincluden; who knows but we may get your friend Peggie to be gudewife to us;" and my uncle laughed.

"Oh, if the proprieties are consulted, and Peggie there, who knows what may happen. Only have your party three days sooner, and you would be in time to cut out Captain Buchanan," she replied.

"Captain Buchanan's a true gentleman, Madge; commend me to him when ye meet him," my Grandmother observed.

"And, dear Grannie, though I pretend no over-affection for his bride, I never said she was not a real lady in all her actions," said Madge.

"Very true, Madge; she is a real lady in all her actions. It's owre late now, but monie a time did I wish that Ashton would mak her mistress o' the Hall."

"And do you know, Grannie, it often struck me that her wishes ran that way also. The old Hall has indeed seen many a strange sight, many a sad change, but ~~but~~strangest and saddest of all, it would have been, to have seen Peggie Paterson in the place of Margaret Home. And now fare thee well, dear Grannie; may happiness dwell with you, and those you love, till we meet again."

"The same kind wish to you, dear Madge," my Grandmother replied, embracing her.

Richard then handed her down-stairs, I following with little Flo.

"You will come to Lincluden," he pleaded.

"No; do not expect me."

"Then you may expect *me*," he replied.

"Worse and worse; bringing my right-trusty and well-beloved cousin, Robin Hunter, to spy out the nakedness of the old Hall, and to make his fingers itch to close on it for his mother. And now, good be wi you;" and, shaking my brother's hand, she entered the coach; to me she bowed—I stretched out my hand; at once she took it, raised it to her lips, and, with no word of greeting between us, the coach drove away. As they drove out of the yard, I saw Jane Douglas coming towards the house, and recollecting that she had offered to accompany me to Mr. Robertson's, and feeling utterly unable for her "disjointed chat," I ran to my Grandmother, told her what I had seen, and begged of her to save me. This she promised to do, and I hastened and put on my capuchin, and sat waiting in my boudoir. Presently my Grandmother joined me, and told me she had managed so as to please Jane, and spare me.

"I tauld her we had an appointment, as she knew, that it behoved us to keep, but that Bernard would never forgie me if, by keeping it, I robbed him o' the pleasure o' seeing her, and that I trusted she would let

him plead our excuse, and let me find her here on my return; and now let us hasten, for we are late:—but, my heart's darling, dinna look sae pale and wretched. Ye look sae like what your dear mother did, afore she was taken from me, that I could fancy it was my child standing before me, with her pale, pale face, and tearful eyes. Martha, *burdalane*, spare my auld e'en the grief o' again seein' her I love the best, fading like a cut flower afore me."

I did my best to comfort my Grandmother; pleaded over-fatigue from my ride, and the want of sleep, and assured her I should soon be strong, and rosy as ever. We drove to Mr. Robertson's, but instead of doing aught, we spent the time looking at his pictures, and talking of the originals, most of whom are well known to us. When we left, he assured my Grandmother that he had been studying my features, and that on the morrow, if I would return at the same hour, he would proceed to draw them.

DECEMBER 14, 1753.—I must alter my calendar, for this is now reckoned the 25th, and styled Christmas-day! Yet the spirit of good old Christmas does not seem in it. To me it appeared particularly sad and solemn, dark and dreary; and the words, "a merrie Christmas," died on my lips each time I attempted to utter them.

The gay season has now fairly begun. I have two balls this week to attend, and many more in prospect. How utterly wearied I am of them all. Were they a thought less kind to me at home, I would not, I could

not, go on with it; but my dear brother ever assures me that he doubly enjoys every pleasure I share with him; and my uncle looks so distressed when I try to be excused, that I have not the heart to give them pain; so I accept of the invitations, and go where they wish me. Heaven knows with how heavy a heart, and how sincerely I long, in the midst of every gay scene, that I were far away in a foreign land. Willingly would I surrender all the comforts and luxuries which surround me here, and share *his* home, no matter how rude or humble it may be.

CHAPTER XV.

JANUARY 10, 1754.—My uncle's lady-party at Lincluden gave general satisfaction. Everything was well arranged by him, and I did my best to entertain the guests, as was my duty. No one was better pleased than Mrs. Buchanan, who, being a bride, was of course the great lady there, and seemed to think the party was given to do her honour. She was, however, far more agreeable than I had ever seen her; and in her rich wedding-dress, a paduasoy, which she told me Madge brought to her from Paris, she looked uncommonly handsome. She spoke very kindly of Madge, and I really believe, at heart, she likes her, though she avers she is often very anxious about her. I said nothing, but I did not feel the less.

When we retired to bed after the ball, Lucy confided to me that Kilmaine had *asked* her, and she had consented, if her father agreed. She seems to be well pleased, and most sincerely do I wish the dear girl all the happiness which she so well deserves.

On our return to Edinburgh, Kilmaine made his proposals in due form to my Grandmother, for the hand of

Lucy, and was by her referred to Mr. Græme. He has gone to the Knowe to-day to plead his suit. My Grandmother has little fear that Mr. Græme will say no, as the marriage is desirable. Kilmaine's character is excellent, and his circumstances good. They say his mother wished another, but she showed no signs of that in her visit to Lucy yesterday. Helen Murray and I are engaged as bridesmaids.

JANUARY 14.—Kilmaine has returned in great delight. Mr. Græme at once gave his consent, and has behaved in the most handsome way possible. Consequently the marriage is to be the 1st of March. Kilmaine wished it sooner, but Lucy was resolute, and stood out for March. She returns to the Knowe next week, and sadly shall I miss my pretty companion. My uncle hints that one marriage brings another, but I told him his hopes in that matter are vain.

FEBRUARY 1.—A white day in my calendar, for I received a letter from Charles—he is well, still on the banks of the Rhine, and every prospect of remaining there a little longer. He tells me to enclose my letters to Mde. de St. Germain, by which means he will get them more surely and more quickly.

FEBRUARY 14.—Valentine's-day. How different were the letters received to-day, not one of them worth the paper on which they were written—to me at least. I consigned them all to the flames, and shall mention at the assembly to-night, that I did so. I dare say some of my partners had some *hand* in the sending of them, I question if the *heart* had much to do in the matter, sure I am that the *head* had nought.

How I wish that the gay season was over, and that I was once more at Mount Baliol. This pursuit of pleasure does weary me so. I am fit for nothing the day after a ball, I feel so utterly and completely exhausted, but they do not perceive this, and I do not like to distress them by telling how weak I feel, and how unfit for the exertion. Yester-night I was at a ball at Dr. Gregory's, in the forenoon I looked so pale, that Richard proposed I should take a ride with him along the sands, to save the enormous consumption of rouge, which otherwise would be requisite ere I could appear. I did so, and felt refreshed, but to-day I am quite unequal for that exertion, and must lie down for some hours ere I am fit for the ball.

FEBRUARY 25.—I return to Mount Baliol to-morrow, even more readily than some months ago I left it. I went to the Valentine's assembly. The room was very much crowded, and very hot. I had walked a minuet with Robin Hunter, and was dancing down a long country dance with him, when suddenly feeling faint, I told him I must sit down. He gave me his arm, for I could scarce stand, and then the first thing I recollect was looking up, and finding myself in my dear brother's arms, in the lobby, whilst my Grandmother was holding her salts to my nose, and Lady Douglas calling in vain for burnt feathers! I assured them that I was now quite well, and able to return to the ball-room, but this no one would allow me to do. Robin Hunter then came, and said he had got chairs, so they said I must go home. The Douglasses wished to accompany me, but that I would not allow; and my brother said it

would never do to rob the ball of its belles, so they returned with their mother to the ball-room. I wished my brother to return, but he would not, and he and Robin Hunter walked alongside of my chair all the way home. This dear brother insisted on carrying me up-stairs, and then went himself for Dr. Gregory, who kindly came at once, and said I was merely suffering for over-exertion, hot rooms, and late hours, and that I must pack off to the country as quickly as might be. I thought, perhaps, there might be other causes, but I said nothing. For some days I kept my bed, and I have never been out since; and as I really am easily tired, I have begged my Grandmother to make my adieux to my friends, as I am unable for the exertion, and so to-morrow we return to Mount Baliol; and without the faintest shadow of regret, I leave Edinburgh and all its gaiety for the peaceful solitude of Mount Baliol.

My Grandmother has just left me; she came to tell me that Robin Hunter has been with my uncle to make proposals for me. As I never gave him the slightest reason to hope, I am innocent of causing him pain. My uncle wished me to see him, and to give him my own answer, but I feel quite unable for the interview; I have, therefore, requested my dear Grandmother to see him for me, and to decline the honour he intends for me, and to do it in such a manner as to leave him no hope for the future.

I could not listen to words of love from another—that would be too much for me. More than ever do I rejoice that we leave Edinburgh to-morrow.

MOUNT BALIOL, MARCH 7.—I am once more at dear Mount Baliol, where every room is hallowed to me by his presence; but I was so wearied with my journey, that for some days I remained in bed. Now I am better and stronger, and already feel the benefit of the country air.

This was to have been Lucy Græme's wedding-day, but her father was taken so ill the week before last, they have been obliged to put it off. Had it been to-day I could not have been present, being still too weak for such an exertion. Kilmaine is there, and Lucy tells me that she likes him better the more she knows him, and that he has gained all their hearts at the Knowe by his kind nursing of her father. But for this illness, she says she would have come to the Mount to be with me, but I have had the two kindest nurses. My brother has remained with us. He declares he was quite glad of an excuse to leave Edinburgh (though he wishes it had been a different one), and that if anything very tempting occurs, he can easily ride in and attend it. Every day, foul or fair, since my return, Madge has ridden across to see me. Poor Madge—dear Madge—when she is near me I forget all I have seen or heard to her prejudice, and give myself up to the pleasure of her society; and she is so kind to me, that we are almost as we used to be; but, then, when she has left me, then it all comes before me, and I feel that unless there were some more powerful rival than Harry, she could not remain insensible to my brother's devotion. He seems perfectly satisfied with the terms on which they stand to

each other; but I, his sister, am not, and I often feel inclined to wonder that, in the words of the great Montrose, he does not say to her,

“ Oh love me less—or love me more,
And play not with my liberty—
Either take all, or all restore,
Bind me at once—or set me free.”

Since my return this time, the oriel-room has been given up to me; it abuts on my own room, so that I am spared the fatigue of going up and down stairs, and when I feel able, I have only to open the window and walk out; as yet I have not got that length, but I have my couch placed near the window, so as to enable me to see all that goes on in the court-yard, before the Mount. All our neighbours, save the Ashtons, are in Edinburgh, so my only visitors are my cousins, and that is now a daily event. Indeed, I begin to count so surely on them, that the other day, when they were later than usual, I asked Madge what had detained her. She seemed to be gratified by my question, and in her half-serious, half-jesting way, replied:

“ Indeed, dear Martha, I did not know whether you'd care a *bodle* if you never saw me again. I feared it was more gratification to myself than you, my daily calls; but it is a famous road for exercising young horses, and so we come daily to break in the colts. But there is a letter that will do you good.” And so it has, all save one part, and that from being weak and ill, and fanciful, I have thought over too much. The letter is from Mrs. M'Lean, whose husband, Æneas, is with Charles on the Rhine. Mrs. M'Lean says she had received a letter a few days previous from her husband,

and they are all well; and then she says, "Æneas writes of *your friend*, my Lord D——, as if he were his own son, and says they have *mony cracks* about auld Scotland, and those they love there." I am a fool to be pained by such a slight matter, but I am weak and ill, and have not strength to combat sad ideas now.

MARCH 9.—To-day I heard something which, in some degree, explains the reason of Ker's rancourous hate towards Charles, and why he so suddenly broke up the happy days of my life. Madge, as usual, had ridden across to inquire for my health, and Harry, who of course accompanied her, was seated in the oriel window, when Richard entered.

"Oh, cousin Dick!" said Harry, "I'm glad that you have come. I wanted to tell you that Daphne's puppies are better than any that you have, and so Madge thinks I had better give them to you."

"Thank you, Harry; but I could not take your favourites, and Juno's will be as good when as old."

"Ah, but cousin Dick, that's it: Juno's are older than Daphne's. Are they not, Madge?"

"Indeed, Hal, I cannot tell, but I am quite sure that you are right."

"Oh, but I'll tell you the way I know so well. Do you remember, Madge, the day that Ker was in our den?"

"When, Harry?" said Madge, hastily, and looking confused.

"Ker in your den?" said my brother at the same moment. "What did he there?"

"Don't you remember, Madge; I had just been at

the stable, and came running in to tell you that Daphne's puppies were black and white, like herself; but you and Ker were so busy talking, you did not hear me come in. At least it was you, Madge, that was speaking, for you were saying that you knew I was different from other lads, for had I been like them, Ker would never have spoken to you as he had done. Oh, don't you remember, Madge! and then you said, that though day and night you mourned over the difference, it seemed as if only now your punishment was complete, when acting on it, Ker had dared to address himself to her he hoped would be heiress of Ashton. Oh, Madge! I never can forget that, for then it struck me that somehow I was different from others; and I have tried to be like them, for fear you might not like me. Indeed I have tried hard, Madge, but some way—I know not how—I cannot do it. I can ride as well as cousin Dick, and mayhap shoot and wrestle as well, and yet I know I am not like him; and so sometimes I fear that because I *am* different from others, that you won't care for me any longer," said the poor boy, sorrowfully.

Madge rose quietly from sitting beside me, and crossing to the oriel where Harry was, she flung her arms round him, and then bending down his head, she kissed his smooth "unwritten brow" tenderly, and said:

"Not care for you! dislike you, because you are different from others! Oh, Harry, darling Harry! how little you know the grief those words cause me."

"Madge, dear Madge! what is the matter with you? Have I done anything wrong? I know I am different from other lads, but if you will only like me, I will try

harder than ever to be the same as others. Indeed I will, dear Madge, if you will only say that you like me;" and poor Harry seized Madge's hand, and clasped it in both his.

"Like you, Harry!" said Madge, earnestly. "Like you, my dear boy! Is there in this wide world any that I prefer to you? Are you not dearer to me than aught else? Harry, do you think if with my life I could undo what I have done, I would not cheerfully lay it down? If by sacrificing every hope, or wish, or feeling, I can benefit you, how readily I will give up everything for you. Harry, there is no one who likes you as I do, and no one whom I like so well as my brave Hal. Only tell me what I can do for you to prove my affection, and rest assured there is no request that you can make that I will ever refuse."

"Then I don't mind one bit being different from others; and cousin Dick will try and make me like himself, and I am sure you would like me to be that, eh, Madge?" said Harry, now smiling through his tears.

"I could not like you better than I do, Harry," said Madge.

"You must teach me to be like you, Harry, and then Madge might like me," said Richard. "Why, man, don't you recollect the other day, when poor Soldan slipped his shoulder, and they thought he must be shot, that you said you could cure him, and he will soon be as sound as ever, thanks to you. And when Stephen was chased by the bull, and they were all afraid to go to his rescue, did you not dash past them all, and save his life? Faith, Harry, I must take lessons from

you, for, good sooth, I know none like you;" and my brother kindly took the boy's hand, whilst Madge's eyes glistened through her tears at hearing her darling thus praised.

"But you never told us about the puppies?"

I do wonder when my brother asked that question if it were to occupy Harry, and give Madge time to recover, or if he wished to hear about Ker—if so, he was rewarded, for Harry at once began:

"The way I know their age is, that I had just come to tell Madge they were like her favourite Daphne, and I forget if I told her or not, for I found Ker there, and she was angry, and told him to leave the room instantly; and he said she had better think twice ere she sent him away, for it was not every day she'd have the like of him in her offer."

"Confound his impudence! I wish I had heard him," said my brother, passionately.

"Oh, I wish you had, for I did not know what to do, and I was just going to tell Madge that I was there, and would throw him out of the window if she liked; but she rang the bell, and told the servant to show Mr. Ker to the door, and never to let him enter again, and so he has never been back, I think; but did he send you your letter, Madge? I always forgot to ask."

"What letter?" exclaimed Madge and my brother, in one breath.

"The one he took with him. Didn't you see him take it? Just as he was leaving the room he crossed to your writing-table, and took up a letter that was lying there, and went away. You were so sad that I did not

like to tell you, and then cousin Dick and Martha, and Master—Lord Derwentwater, I mean—came across and spent the day, and I forgot all about it till now we were speaking about the puppies.”

Madge sat a few minutes silent, and then starting up suddenly, she exclaimed:

“I see it—I see it all now! I am an ill-starred being, and bring evil to all I like the best, or who have anything to do with me. I remember now perfectly, I had addressed a letter ‘*To my Lord Derwentwater, at Mount Baliol,*’ when, recollecting that I should not, perhaps, deliver it myself, I tore it off, and addressed it simply to ‘*Mr. Edwardes.*’ Ker, who used to be too much at Ashton, entered when I had finished it, and, as Harry tells, secured the address, as it was it he produced the night he attempted the capture of Lord Derwentwater. Of course, that betrayed that the earl was in this country, and where. The letter I delivered safely that day when you came to the Hall, but the bustle of your arrival, and other matters”—and Madge sighed deeply—“prevented me from missing the cover, which I had otherwise done. That unfortunate letter has been the cause of all your unhappiness, Martha, for Ker, thinking to be revenged on me, gave information that Lord Derwentwater was in this country. His attainder had never been removed, so a warrant against him was easily obtained. And I to have been the cause of all this unhappiness! Oh, Martha! can you ever forgive me?”

“Dear Madge!” I said, “even had you been to blame, your prompt assistance and succour in saving

him would have wiped out the offence; as it is, I have nothing to forgive—an unintentional mistake I could not blame.”

“Thank you for these words,” said Madge; she raised my hand to her lips, and hastily quitted the room. Harry wished to follow her, but knowing there are times when we are unable for the society of those we love the most, we told him to remain with us.

My brother asked him about Ker, and Harry, in his true and simple way, told us that Ker used to be often at Ashton. That once he had given him (Harry) a dog, and Madge said it was a mongrel cur, like himself, and advised Harry to send it back, which he had done, and Ker was angry about that. And Madge once asked their father to forbid Ker to come to Ashton, and their father had begged her to receive him civilly for his sake. So Madge said she would only do so on condition that he never addressed his love to her, for she considered it an insult. So papa told Madge he would speak to Ker, but for his sake we must keep good friends with him; so I told papa, that if Ker did anything he or Madge did not like, that I would soon settle him, for I would horsewhip him till he could not speak. I would not fight him with my sword or pistol, because gentlemen only fought with their equals, and Madge said Ker was no gentleman, or he would not act as he did. So papa looked quite pleased (said Harry, proudly), and said “I was a fine brave fellow, but that I must not quarrel with Ker;” but I told him I had no fear.

Here Madge returned, and of course the conversation was changed.

Shortly after that, Harry and Richard left the room. Now or never, I thought, such an opportunity may never occur again; this time I shall not have to regret letting it pass, so I called Madge to me, and made room for her on the couch on which I was reclining, and then I said to her:

"Madge, I must speak to you. You know that I am weak and ill, and it may be that sickness dims my mental vision, and makes me see things differently from what I should do were I better; but, Madge, I must ask you, What mean these letters between you and Charles? Surely I have a right to ask that question?"

"My dear child you are ill, and I won't tease you, or I would tell you, that though you have a right to question the Earl of Derwentwater, you have *none* to question Madge Murray, and to him I would refer you for an answer. But I will set your mind at rest. The letters you have seen, or known of my delivering, are none of mine. Further I cannot say, and surely that is enough. Consider, dear! Lord Derwentwater is affianced to you; what then matters it how many letters he gets or gives? Surely you would not conjure up an idea prejudicial to him were he to get a letter from me every day of his life?"

"Ah, Madge, I know not that; but you are too careless to be jealous—you cannot understand the feeling."

"I am too proud to be jealous! I do *not* understand the feeling. I am either all—or nothing," she answered, proudly.

"True, Madge; but put yourself in my place."

"Would you really like me to do so?" she answered, smiling.

"Heaven knows! if it would make Charles happier I would at once resign him," I said; but the tears which rose to my eyes belied my words. Madge flung her arms round me, and comforted me as if I had been a child. I fear she often thinks I am little better; but my up-bring has not hardened me, as she says hers has done.

"My little Martha! my dear child! you know I never meant that: wait till occasion calls, and you are stronger, ere you break your little heart with such heroic magnanimity. Only fancy poor Lord Derwentwater's horror—instead of the sweet, amiable, and *aimable* Martha, to be given over to the tender mercies of mad Madge Murray!! You know perfectly that he never did, and never could, care for me; and you know I like every one exactly in proportion as they like me, neither more nor less. So, strange to your ears as it must sound, I do not care for Lord Derwentwater one bit more than it is quite pretty and proper that I should do. Now, after this fearful confession of heresy, is your mind at ease?"

"Yes, Madge!" I answered, sobbing like a child, for indeed I am weak as one. "Yes, Madge, but those letters?"

"Those letters! How can you, like a child, be afraid of a shadow? You believe that Lord Derwentwater is attached to you?"

"Ah, good Heavens, yes! Could I doubt him, and live?" I replied, earnestly.

"Then, what can it matter how many letters he gets? Suppose he gets fifty letters, what can it import to you, so long as he likes you fifty times better than the writer of any of them?"

I grew desperate in my courage, and said:

"But, Madge, suppose my brother Richard ~~were~~ were to receive letters from Ellen Murray, should you not feel jealous?"

"The case is not a parallel one, so cannot be compared. I am not the affianced wife of Sir Richard Baliol."

"That is your own fault," I said, half aside.

"Consequently," she continued, unheeding my interruption, "can have no business or no feeling of anger as to whom he receives letters from; but were I so, do you fancy I should care one iota? If he preferred me so far as to select me from amongst all others, should I have any cause to dread a rival? I tell you, Martha, I am too proud to be jealous. I must be first, or nothing. So long as I am first, I can have no cause of fear, whatever I may hear or see. And when I cease to be *first*, I can know no second place—all would be at an end between us. You ask me what I would do were I to be tried as you think you are, and so I have told you; I never could be tried by jealous fears. The letters which scare you so were none of mine, more than the letters that Ringwood brings you from Langholm are his—he merely has the care of conveying them safely. Now, are your doubts laid?"

"Yes, dear Madge! I don't think I can ever doubt you again," I replied, embracing her.

"There you are wrong. In your heart you doubt me still, and we both know that. But do not doubt Lord Derwentwater. If he has sworn to be true to you, believe that he is so. In life there can be no misery so great as doubting those we love. I may be—I am, guilty of more faults and follies than you, dear child, could reckon over in a long summer day; but the folly of liking one who liked not me (thanks to my pride, I suppose), I have never been guilty of. So, pretty Martha, rest in peace."

They came to tell her that the horses were ready, and so she left me, better friends than we have been since the morning I left the Hall. Yet I could not fail to remark, that when I said I should never doubt her again, she at once told me that I doubted her still, but attempted no refutation. Madge, Madge! you are a strange dazzling puzzle, which it would take a wiser head than mine to solve.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARCH 20.—To-day's papers contain such news as has deprived me of nearly all hope. The French have invaded Hanover, and the Duke of Cumberland has left London to take the command of the allied troops of Germans and Hanoverians raised to repel them. They try to comfort me. Alas! what comfort can I know, knowing as I do that Charles is exposed to danger.

MARCH 31.—The news in the papers nearly killed me. My Grandmother was in despair, for I became so much worse, that she sent to Edinburgh for my uncle and brother. Richard only left me two days previous, to attend a ball given by Lady Douglas. They came in all haste, and were horrified to find me so ill—my dear uncle blaming himself for it all; and in his despair declaring, that if I would get better, not only would he sanction my engagement, but, as soon as I was able, he would take me to the Continent, and would himself give me away. It was like new life to me to hear this, so that night I wrote the good news to Charles—begged of him to be doubly careful, and that I should neglect no means by which I could gain sufficient strength to

be able for the journey. Once there, I had no fear but he would prove the most skilful, as well as the most kind, physician; so by degrees I have been improving, and everything looks more cheerful around me. My uncle has returned to Edinburgh, satisfied that I am now likely to get soon well. Richard remains with us. Yesterday was his twenty-eighth birthday. As I am still an invalid, he insisted there should be no party here, but he said I should preside at dinner, so he and my Grandmother resolved to dine with me, and I determined to ask Madge and Harry, knowing the pleasure it would give him to see us altogether again. She and Harry rode across in the forenoon, bringing Richard a *souvenir*. Harry gave him one of Daphne's celebrated puppies, and Madge gave him a little silver dog-whistle, with which he declared himself to be right-well pleased, as it would ever be near his lips when in use. My Grandmother begged of her to remain to drink Sir Richard's health, and a good wife to him, ere he was a year older, and to ride home in the evening, as she had often done before, and she at length agreed to our requests. We were a merry party, for already my uncle's cure has worked as magic on me, and Madge laughed and jested with my brother more than is even her wont. After dinner my brother declared that not only must she drink his health, but also the king's! That is a toast which, for many reasons, is never given in our house, and I could not but be amazed, but Richard seemed infected by her wildly gay spirits.

"Now," he said, "a bumper to the king! I see you have a glass of water near you. I shan't look, so

you may make it 'the king over the water,' if you like."

To my surprise, she replied:

"Not at all necessary, dear cousin—nay, don't shut your eyes. I am not going to drink to 'the king across the water.' Here's to our lawful 'king on this side of the water!'" and then, setting down her empty glass, she sang:

"Here's to the king, boys—
Ye ken wha I mean, boys—
And here's to ilk ane, boys,
That will do't again."

"Bravo, Madge! You see my Grandmother and Martha refuse my toast, but we won't inform on them this time. Now sing me my favourite, 'Kenmure's on an awa,' and I shall ask nothing more to-night."

Madge did sing it, and so beautifully and with such spirit as I had never heard before. When she finished, my brother said:

"I am a Jacobite at heart, Madge, for I never hear that song that I don't long to fight for Royal Charley. Only sing me such songs for one night, and next day I should be off, to put myself and my sword at my Prince's disposal."

"Ah, cousin, dear cousin! would that I might believe you—would that anything I could do could induce you to become an adherent of your lawful king's, a follower of your noble Prince. But why lose a day? Now, ere you are an hour older, become one of us." Madge spoke so enthusiastically, and was so earnest, that she heard not the opening of the door, but we did, and looking towards it, there was our kinsman, Ashton, entering.

"Ashton! cousin!" said my Grandmother; "this is

indeed an unexpected pleasure." At the sound of her father's name Madge started up, and flew towards him, looking terrified beyond measure.

"Well!" she at length gasped out. He shook his head, but made no reply.

"What?—tell me."

"The worst, Madge—all is lost!"

"Lost!" she almost screamed. "And my uncle?"

"Taken prisoner, Madge."

Madge uttered no cry, but fell senseless at his feet. Ere he could stoop to raise her, my brother rushed forwards, and taking her in his arms, as if she had been a child, bore her to the window. The cool air blowing on her face soon revived her. We were all so busied with her, we could ask Ashton no questions. The moment Madge opened her eyes, and saw her father standing beside her, she started up. Till now she had been resting in my brother's arms, for he would not part with her—no, not even to her father; she started up, pushed back her curls, which had fallen over her brow, and said, hastily, "I am better now—tell me—my uncle—and—and——"

"There need be no secret now, Madge; all is lost—utterly lost—but the Prince has escaped."

"Thank Heaven!" she exclaimed.

"So has Loch-Garry, but your uncle is a prisoner."

Madge closed her eyes, and sank back so deadly pale, we thought she would again faint, but in a moment she recovered, raised herself from Richard's arm, which had encircled her, and, calm and collected as ever, said to her father:

"What do you wish me to do? I am quite ready."

"You had better remain here to-night, dear," he said kindly; "I am sure you will shelter her to-night?" he said to my brother.

"And for ever: and you also, Ashton. Pray remain here, and with my life I will protect you. I am at home this time, and if they attempt again to capture a guest of mine, they will find they have no longer defenceless women to deal with. Do you remain here, and trust to me for your safety."

"I thank you, Sir Richard," my kinsman said, grasping my brother's hand. "And not the less so, that I believe your kindness is unnecessary: as far as I know, no warrant is out against me. It is for his share in '45 that Archibald Cameron is now a prisoner. Knowing the connexion between us, they may probably search the Hall for letters or papers. I wish to spare Madge that, and am sure that here she will be a welcome guest. I must now hasten to the Hall. Madge will tell you everything: there need be no longer any secrets—all is lost—even hope is gone. Madge, dear, remain to-night with your cousins—to-morrow return home to me, and we will then settle what is best to be done—by that time I shall have heard more." Ashton kissed his daughter tenderly, and then he and Richard left the room.

Madge remained as he left her—motionless as a statue: the only sign of life, the deep sighs that came from her overburdened heart. We did not speak to her, or approach her, but left her to herself, and so she sat for some time. Richard did not return, but the oriel window is close to the court-yard, and I could see him

talking earnestly with Ashton. The noise made by the horse's hoofs, as her father rode away, was the first thing which aroused Madge from her stupor. She started slightly, dashed her hand across her eyes, as if to chase away a painful sight, and then walked steadily to the couch on which I was reclining, and near which my Grandmother sat. I made room for her beside me, and flung my arms round the dear girl, remembering that such grief as now tore her heart, but for her courage, would have been mine; and tears rose to my eyes when I thought what would then have been my anguish. Madge saw me wiping my eyes, and turning towards me, she said:

"Ah, Martha! you have no cause to weep. You can thank Heaven that Lord Derwentwater is safe from a prison, whilst I—I ought to weep to think that whilst I was able to assist him, my own uncle has been taken a prisoner. Oh! why would he not allow me to accompany him? This would never have been. They should have taken my life ere they touched him."

"Tell us about it, Madge? Ye ken how dear your uncle is to me: till now I didna ken he was in the country."

"Yes, Grannie, he has been here some months. My father says I may now tell all—that even hope is gone, and secrecy useless. I am sure neither of you forget the night they attempted the capture of Lord Derwentwater. My uncle was then in the country."

"And never cam to see us, Madge? I didna trow that Archie Cameron had sae sune forgotten auld friends."

"Forget you, Grannie! You know my uncle never forgot a friend in his life, but he was here at the greatest risk to himself and others; and it was agreed that—save my father and myself—no one should know that he was in this country. Oh! would that it had remained a secret: with us he was safe, but our unfortunate cause seems ever to be the nurse of traitors. I must go back to that night—indeed to some weeks before, when my uncle came to this country. No thoughts of politics brought him back, but he longed to see us again, to hear the kindly Scottish tongue, to look once more on his own native land, to tread once more the heather, and to listen to the sweet songs of the blackbird and the mavis. Oh! only those exiled like him can know how dear Scotland is to Scottish hearts. I shall tell you all; I know every word is safe with you, and that your hearts are as true to the king, *our* king, as my own. You have observed, I dare say, Grannie, a tree which has been cut down, its branches lopt off, and the trunk supposed to be dead, and yet it will cast out a few shoots—they may come to nothing, but they prove there is still some vitality at the heart. So it has been with us. They thought in '46 that we were trampled on never to rise—our life crushed out by their cruel tyranny—and that we should never sprout again. Yet a shoot of fair promise did appear; but Heaven is against us, dear Grannie—it is the last. Hope now is lost, and we shall never again see a Stuart in the halls of Holy-rood. For some time after my uncle came to the Hall there was no thought of any rising; but at last, letters came from across the sea to sound the feel-

ings of the clans. You remember the letter to Lord Derwentwater, which I gave him the night of your ball, Martha? *Now* I may tell you, that it was from the Prince, and wishing to know if he might still count on his devotion; but at that time nothing was planned—merely dreamt of. You will wonder how I, a girl, come to know all this; but you know the unhappy state of our family, and that I fill Harry's place in my father's confidence; and I believe I may say, I have never betrayed the trust reposed in me. My uncle was then with us. Oh, would that he had never left! You thought me wanting in my hospitality the day you were at the Hall:—you knew not the difficult part I had to play. I only was trusted with the secret that he was in this country, and on me fell most of the arrangements for his concealment at the Hall. That day he and my father had both ridden out. You know the miners at Dunsmuir are a wild set, and ever ready for any outbreak. They think they are under obligations to my father, and so to a man are ready to die for him, and sometimes it answers a good purpose to get them to make a little demonstration." Madge looked at me, but continued: "Those poor dragoons, when it was desirable to concentrate them at Dunsmuir, and so leave the rest of the country clear, a word to Jock Linton, the captain of the miners, and the men instantly became dissatisfied, and muttered threats of taking the owner of the mines down the pit, and seeing how he would like the truck himself. They—at least my father—had gone to Dunsmuir that day, and I knew my uncle would return soon, and I was in agony lest he

should be seen by you. I dare say you thought me mad, and I was well-nigh at my wit's end, thinking how to prevent his coming suddenly upon us. You remember I made them light up the dining-room, and we sat there. It looks towards the way he was to return, and I thought if he saw lights, which were never there in general, he would guess there were strangers at the Hall, and not come near. Till I had you safe in your rooms I had not one easy moment, and I placed Lord Derwentwater in the room my uncle occupied, knowing that heart and soul he was devoted to the cause."

"And did you doubt us, Madge?" I said, reproachfully.

"Never! myself sooner," she replied earnestly. "No, I never doubted you," she repeated; "but it was a dangerous secret to yourselves, and I had no wish to involve either in what has proved a fallen cause. Sir Richard had done enough in having Lord Derwentwater in his house. I know not what might have been said had he connived at the residence of Archibald Cameron in Scotland; but I would readily have trusted my life to either of you—or my uncle's, which is infinitely dearer to me, and more valuable. At last, you retired, and I sat and waited for him, making you burn a light in my room, which was his guiding-star that all was safe, and I was waiting him. At length he came, and I accompanied him to the library. I know we were seen, but that was an accident I could not prevent," she quietly remarked.

How ashamed I felt that I had ever doubted the

brave girl. Why had I not been like Richard, and doubted rather my own senses than her?

"Oh, Madge, dear Madge, forgive me; I ought to have known you better. Forgive me, dear Madge." I flung my arms around her, and ashamed of my suspicious nature, I wept bitterly.

"I do, cousin—far sooner than you will forgive yourself—for having misjudged an old friend. Well, you left the next day, and my uncle remained quietly at the Hall. Then came the attempt on Lord Derwentwater; and ignorant at that time how the fact of his residence in Scotland had been known, we feared for my uncle's safety, so next day we all left the Hall, and went to Dunsmuir. My uncle was for some days in one of the pits, and I used frequently to go down to him. Harry we of course did not take. The fever was raging there at the time, and my uncle well repaid the shelter by his care of the sick."

"It was like himsel, Madge; friend and foe, a' had cause to bless the good Archibald Cameron. Mony a time have I heard that, after the battle, he was as ready to succour the wounded troops as our ain folk."

"True, Grannie, it was like himself. My father returned to the Hall before us, and then my uncle went to the Highlands, and Harry and I home. Matters were beginning to assume some shape. I knew that my uncle's return from the Highlands would be speedy, and I knew that then something would be settled. Do you remember that day I wrote to you that I was ill?"

"Perfectly," I replied.

"I really was ill, and I did fear hurting you; but

more, I feared any danger to my uncle. I resented the coldness which you and your brother showed towards me. It's all forgiven now—but I did feel it. I knew not what you might see at the Hall, and I knew I could give no explanation, and so I wrote advising you not to come. You did not obey me, and by the merest chance missed what I feared—seeing my uncle, who arrived that day: in fact, when you were there.”

He, then, was the peasant at whose feet I had seen her kneeling; his was the hand which, unforbidden, had caressed her, and played with her silken curls. Oh, how I despised the littleness of mind which had suspected her so unjustly! How ashamed I felt that I had mentioned it to Richard, and by so doing had tried the noble, yet well-placed faith which he had in her! I thought a moment whether I would own it or not. At least let me have the merit of confessing my fault; but Madge went on with her story.

“ Well, things were becoming more definite, and it was necessary to communicate with others—I said I was quite willing, as far as I could, for at that time they were watching us; of course, the fact of my going to France could attract no attention, whereas had my father or uncle gone, it might; besides, it was chiefly to deliver some letters, and as Martha knows, I am an indifferent good hand at that. So to France I went, and brought back little Flora to gladden my uncle's heart with the sight of his child.”

“ And Madge, was there no fitter messenger than you?” my Grandmother inquired.

"Many, dear Grannie; but none to be had at the moment. It was a private embassy mine, not a public one on which the fate of nations depends, else, had they never chosen a weak woman—but I merely went to find out how such as Lochiel stood disposed with regard to us, ere any step could be taken amongst his men. When matters were to be arranged, it was a wiser head than mine that went to take the management; I was merely a straw on the surface, to tell in which direction the current set, and for that purpose more efficient than aught more precious. I returned with little Flo, and the intelligence I had gone to gather, and then they began to plan. This sudden departure of the Duke of Cumberland has hurried matters, and ruined all. Elibank and his brother Alexander Murray joined the cause, heart and hand. Alick and sixty chosen men were to surprise the palace of St. James, and to capture the person of the Elector. The Prince himself was in London, and so Grannie, I hoped by this time, that our own king was on this side of the water. Whilst this was going on in London, Loch-Garry and my uncle, as brother of *the* Lochiel, were to raise the clans; but all has failed—I know not how. You heard my father say that my uncle was a prisoner, and that even hope was now lost."

"No, Madge, hope is not lost, our Prince is safe; but oh, why did he not return to the kindly Scots; why no trust again to them; why did he not come to his ain countrie?" my Grandmother anxiously inquired.

"It was no want of love and trust that kept him from Scotland, but it was thought his presence alone

could rouse the English. We had only to be told that *our Charlie* was in England, and we would soon march to join him there. So this time he was advised to go at once to England. And now I know no more." Madge remained silent, and, leaning her head on her hand, sighed deeply.

After a short pause I said to Madge: "Do you know you are mistaken in fancying I did not see your uncle that day I rode over to the Hall? I was in your den, and both saw and heard."

She smiled as she replied:] "I am most unfortunate; all my well-laid plans and deep conspiracies have failed, and to fancy that it was your dove-like eyes which were to prove so keen, and see all you should not see; and that you, who have not been at the Hall half a dozen times in your life, should just chance to arrive at the very moment you were not wanted."

"And still worse, Madge, to find that I am of such a suspicious nature, and so evil-disposed myself, that I must fancy there was harm and wrong, when the evil existed only in my imagination."

"But I allow appearances were against me, and I was unable to explain them, and had I been able, I should have been too proud to justify myself, so no wonder then you were misled."

"Ah, but dearest Madge, how hard it must have been for you, to know that you were innocent, and yet to bear all my unfounded suspicions."

"And how much worse had I deserved them; having done nothing to deserve it, your coldness was more easily borne."

"There was one, Madge, that did you justice—my brother Richard. When he took time at Kilmaine to think the matter over, he became convinced that we were both mistaken, and after that, nothing that I told him I saw, or heard, could in the least shake his confidence in you."

Madge blushed deeply, and for a few minutes made no reply; then quietly she said: "I know I have a dear and true friend in my cousin Richard. The fault must be mine if *he* ever changes, for he is noble, and just, and judges my actions by his own feelings, and not by the hearsay of the world; he is too kind and generous readily to give up one who has few friends besides himself."

My Grandmother here interposed, and said:

"Madge, darling, dinna speak that way. I ken few who can boast o' sae monie; you are dear to us all, Madge, and to all who know ye; and sae far from having few friends, I think ye hae but ae enemy."

"Myself, dear Grannie," she replied, smiling.

"E'en sae, dear bairn; and I dinna think ye hae a waur ane."

"I often, often think so, dear Grannie," said Madge, sadly; "and think how different I might have been, and mayhap that I was meant for something better than I am ever likely to be. But evil done cannot be undone, and only a coward blames others for his own bad deeds."

All the time we were speaking, Richard was walking up and down the court-yard with Harry; he did not enter to inquire for Madge, but ever and anon he

stopped in his walk, and looked at us through the window whilst we sat listening to her. Knowing that he would like to hear, and feeling that if I had been the first to accuse dear Madge, the only reparation I could make was to be equally ready to justify her, I therefore beckoned him to come to me, and leaving my Grandmother and Madge, I went and met him in the passage. "Dear Richard," I said, "I wronged poor Madge sadly. You did her justice—it was her uncle, Dr. Cameron, whom I saw with her."

He seemed to be in no ways surprised or elated, but quietly remarked:

"When her father mentioned Dr. Cameron's being in Scotland, I was sure it must be so; had I not been a blind buzzard, I had seen that it must have been him, when she brought back Flora from Paris, and told us she had not seen her uncle. And this day, which began so happily for me, to end so sadly for poor Madge! How is she?—sorrowful enough, I'm sure. Tell her Harry is with me," and so saying, he returned to his companion.

Madge pleaded a headache, and retired soon to her own room. I offered to accompany her, but she said she was too sad to be fit company for any but herself. My Grandmother went several times to see her, and ever brought back the same report—she was sitting at the window, doing nothing, and wanting nothing—thinking over what could not now be mended. And so the long evening wore on. My brother did not ask to see her, and doubtless he knows best what best she likes; but he sent Harry to her, to tell her that, know-

ing she would be anxious to return home, the horses would be ready at seven in the morning, or sooner, if she wished. Harry returned to say, that that was what she wished, "but poor Madge had such a headache she could not speak to him, and she hoped cousin Dick would let him have one of his big picture-books to look at."

We told Richard all that Madge had told us, and sat late talking over the matter, and wondering what will be done to Dr. Cameron. At the worst we think it will be a year's imprisonment, but from Madge's distress she evidently dreads harsher measures.

CHAPTER XVII.

APRIL 1.—I was awoke this morning by Madge speaking to me. She was equipped for riding, and told me the horses were ready, and time precious, and so she must leave me. Richard rode across with them, and we are anxiously expecting his return, to hear what is to be done. It is now past noon, and yet he comes not.

Richard has returned. Ashton has heard that Dr. Cameron is to be carried direct to London, so he had made every arrangement for Madge, Flora, and Harry, accompanied by the old butler, Roberts, to proceed there, and he is to follow as soon as possible; but meanwhile, he thinks he will be of more use to his brother-in-law in Scotland. Richard said he offered to accompany them, but that Ashton would not allow. "So all I could do," said Richard, "was to see them safely the first mile or two of their long journey, and then return and tell you about them."

We have all been sad and sorrowful to-day. It seemed as if a dark cloud had overshadowed the

house; and no Madge, like a bright sunbeam, came to dispel it.

APRIL 15.—Life and death are strangely mingled here. To-day I heard from Lucy Græme, telling me that her father is recovering now, though slowly, and that though May be considered such an unlucky month to marry in, that she and James have no fear; and that about the 20th she hopes to claim the fulfilment of my promise to be her bridesmaid.

To-day I had a letter from my dear Madge, written with all the calmness of despair. In an incredibly short time she had hurried up to London to be with her uncle. He is tried, and condemned to death! Madge says her father is with them now, and making every possible exertion to obtain a pardon—but she has no hope.

My brother has started for London; he says he ought to have some claim on Government, having fought at Fountenoy and elsewhere (and, oh, would he had not, but for being abroad in '45, I am sure he would have been with his Prince), and he will push every claim to the utmost in behalf of Madge's uncle.

27th.—But all in vain have been his exertions, if indeed he arrived in time; for the paper we got from Edinburgh to-day, announces that on the 19th Archibald Cameron was executed at Tyburn for high treason. The good Archibald Cameron—the brother of the Lochiel to perish thus, like a common malefactor. And yet, brave heart, that has thus with your life sealed your devotion to your exiled King, many may envy your untimely end; and though hurried thus with in-

decent haste from judgment to death, death in such a cause could have no terrors.

MAY-DAY, 1754.—My brother has returned. He says he arrived in London the morning of the 19th, having travelled night and day, but too late to do aught save he hoped to be of some use to poor Madge, who was with her uncle to the last moment that it was possible for her to be. Richard had remained with him to the very last: he met his end with the same calm fortitude which, even our enemies remark, has distinguished all who have perished for our cause. The Murrays are returning to the Hall, but more leisurely; and as he could be of no more use, he would not, he says, intrude on sorrow which he could in no ways assuage.

MAY 7.—The Murrays are again at the Hall, but I have not seen Madge. Harry rode across to-day, bringing me a letter from Madge, enclosing one she had received from Lochiel. It is written early in April, ere he could have received the intelligence of the capture of his uncle. In it he mentions that M. d'Etrées, and all her friends with him on the Rhine are well, as he had heard from Ian M'Nab, who is there as a volunteer, and complains sadly that they have been so long idle. This is all the intelligence I have had of Charles for months; but I know the difficulty of sending letters to Scotland, and am thankful that he is well. This letter of Lochiel's gives me some heart to prepare for pretty Lucy's wedding; and if I stand the fatigue of it well, I shall then remind my uncle of his promise,

and begin my preparations for joining Charles—how speedily and happily they will be made!

Madge in her letter says that she cannot yet come to see me, but by the time I return (from the Knowe) she hopes to have acquired what she so much needs—resignation.

MAY 19.—*The Knowe*. I stood the journey here much better than was expected. The guests have arrived, and such as had seen me in Edinburgh declare that the country has done wonders, actually bringing back the roses, which the hot rooms had made fade so fast. They little know the powerful aid that hope has lent to my recovery, and with the prospect of so soon joining Charles, I feel equal for anything. To-night the others insisted on going through all the usual bridal ceremonies, but I being still an invalid, was excused attending, and so retired early.

MAY 20.—A thousand thanks, dearest Madge, for making this a merry wedding to me: her father had received a packet of letters by a private hand from Paris, and one to me from Charles. Madge waited not for my return, but riding over herself to the Mount, saw Ringwood, and told him that if he would ride, so as that I got this letter before the marriage, he would get leave to dance at the wedding, and get thanks besides. Ringwood had certainly wasted no time by the road, for when I went to dress, it was given me: but I must now hasten and dress the bride.

MAY 21.—The letter from Charles was an answer to one I had sent to him, when I was very sad and sorrow-

ful, and he writes so cheerfully, and such comforting words, that I could not but feel more at ease about him than I have done for months. He assures me that I waste anxiety on him, for he has little prospect of becoming a hero. The receipt of the letter put me in such gay spirits, that I actually enjoyed the marriage and ball, for all were merry, and "the bride's father blithest o' a'," for he insisted on dancing down a country-dance with my Grandmother, and a handsomer couple there was not there.

I can imagine nothing more lovely than Lucy was in her bridal attire; and I am sure Kilmaine was of my opinion. Ellen Murray and I (as her bridesmaids) dressed her, and truly she did us credit. The marriage took place at three, and at four we sat down to dinner. Sholto Douglas and my brother were groomsman and bridesman, and I fear Sir Archibald Primrose may yet have some time to wait, for, as it was my brother's duty to take care of Miss Murray, he was most heedful to do so. I often long to give Jane Douglas a hint about Madge, but she is so heedless in her conversation that I have refrained. The day was one of the loveliest that I ever remember. After dinner we all went out, that the tenants who were assembled on the lawn might see the bonnie bride.

In the evening we had a large ball. I met Robin Hunter for the first time, and though the meeting was awkward for me, I managed better than I expected I could have done; and, luckily, the only time he asked me to dance I was engaged.

The bustle of the wedding and the excitement brought

on one of the most excruciating headaches I ever felt, and I feared I was going to be ill again; for long after I went to bed strange images and sounds seemed to flit around my couch, and I felt as I never in my life felt before. I cannot describe it, but the feeling was strange and awful. Towards morning I fell asleep, and had so fair a dream, that I chid the sun, which, by shining on my head, woke me from it. I dreamt that Charles and I were once more together—once more wandering side by side through the dark woodland shades of Mount Babel; and that several times he repeated to me, smiling, the words "Hasten back!" Suddenly a bright light shone around us—he faded from my side, and I awoke. The sun was shining brightly, and so vivid was the impression, that the words "hasten back" were still ringing in my ears. I hope it is a happy omen that he will hasten back to Paris, as I requested he would, and meet me there.

JUNE 7.—My preparations for going abroad have commenced, and are proceeding most happily. Madge has been several times to see me. She looks so sad and dejected I scarce recognise her as the same merry Madge, and yet she seems to strive to be cheerful, so as to throw no shade over my happiness. I only wait to hear from Charles where I am to join him, and then depart immediately. Every day now I may expect his letter, and then——

JUNE 12.—My dream of life and love is over. This letter, which poor Madge gave me, tells that for me all is ended:

(*Immediate.*)

For

THE SECRETARY JAMES MURRAY,

Of Ashton Hall,

Scotland.

(Care of Dr. Græme, Paris.)

The Camp of Hamelen, the 21st o' May, 1754.

MY DEAR SECRETARY,—Your remittance o' the 3rd o' April came safe to hand, and myself and monie anither honest man, owe ye more than we can ever pay, for sae kindly helping us in our day of need. I hoped to have seen bonnie Scotland ance mair, ere I laid my auld carcage in the moul, but though ye ever said, that ane o' my hands was worth twa o' my heads, I fear my auld dame would no loe me sae weel without it; and useless though it be, I could ill spare it, and the fate o' poor Archie Cameron is a terrible warning.

I suppose your dochter would advertise you o' the fact, that myself, and monie a better man o' us, volunteered to serve under Lord Derwentwater, and that is why I now write to tell you and yours about him. To do the whilk properly, I will commence at the 7th o' May, when we crossed the Weser, and continued marching till Sunday the 18th, when we came to the village o' Latford, when we encamped. The duke—aye, Secretary—bludie Cumberland himself was commanding our foes! Many a thocht was gi'en to Cul-loden—mony a vow o' deep revenge passed among us.

They found, when they made an attack, that he had reinforced his outposts, whilst he himself had withdrawn to a stronger position. We had no hand in the ploy that day. That night, when I was about to lie down, my brave young colonel came to where I was, and asked me if I would go wi' him to visit his *pickets*, and ye may be well assured that I readily agreed. I could no but remark that he was no in his usual spirits, and I made sae free as to say so. He said he knew it weel, but he felt that he would na survive the morn, and that he couldna feel as usual, and sic a change sae near. I tried, in my poor way, to comfort him, but he tauld me, that it was no for himself that he cared, but for the sake o' a bonnie young lassie that he lo'ed in Scotland, and that if he fell, he hoped I would let her know his last thoughts had been o' her. Ye may be sure I promised this, for I thought o' my ain auld dame, Secretary, and I thought if I fell, that ye would be kind to her; but she would na hae troubled ye lang. I said I would do what he required, and he said that if I wrote to you, Secretary, that ye kent her weel, and would tell her; and so whether it be your ain dear dochter, or anither, I know not, but I tell truly as it fell out.

The next day (the 19th o' May) we found the enemy sae securely lodged between the Weser and the woods, with the village o' *Hastenbec* to the front, that all our attempts to turn their *flanks* were of no avail. Three several attacks we made, but gained nothing. I saw my lord again that evening—indeed we passed the night seated by the same watch-fire, for that night

we lay on our arms, and I made bold to tell him, that it had no been his ain *wraith*, but that of some other ane, for I misdoubted not but he had had some kind of warning. He laughed and said it must have been so indeed, and was in such brave spirits, that I do marvel yet that it never struck me that the poor young lad was *fey*.

But to make a sad tale short—for little as ye would think it, the tears are stealing down my auld wrinkled cheeks as I write to you, Secretary—the next day, the 20th, by 5 A.M., the *dance* began. Our left wing was repulsed by Darkenhausen, and his deevil's brood o' Hanoverians, and the fate o' the day was mair than dubious, when the word was given for us to advance, and attack the Grenadiers. I wish ye could hae seen us, Secretary! Our young lord turned to his Frenchmen, and said, "*Ha, Messieurs! en avant, la mort, ou la victoire!*" and then looking to us Scots, his last words were, "*Remember bloody Culloden, and follow me!*" I wish you could hae heard us, Secretary. It would hae made you twenty years younger, as it did me, to hear again the *slogan* o' the clans, as we rushed on, as one man, shouting for *revenge*! We charged up to the battery, and carried it before us, for nothing could withstand us; and ever the foremost man was our brave Derwentwater, worthy son o' his martyred sire!

The fortune o' the day was turned by that charge, and the duke fled! I thought maybe to hae had a cut at him myself; but he is reserved for a less honourable death than on the field o' *Hastenbec*.

When the battle was over, and the day ours, we thought the victory dearly purchased, when we saw our young colonel's place empty. We found his body lying in the midst o' the slain, at the battery which he had sae bravely carried, which he was the first to mount, and where he had been cut down. He was quite dead, and his sword broken in his hand; but he held it sae tight that I could no unclasp it, and so we buried him, the broken sword in his hand, M. d'Etrées and M. de St. Germain acting as chief mourners.

I canna write mair, for I got some scratches myself, and a wound that will never heal, when this gallant young lad was laid low, and an auld man like me left to mourn him.

Fare ye weel, Secretary; we will never meet here below now, but ye will be kind to my auld dame when I am gone.

Your friend, in sore distress,

ÆNEAS McLEAN.

SEPTEMBER 17, 1754.—Three months since last I wrote! This is my eighteenth birthday! and after all that has occurred I live to write these words—once more to open my Diary!—to feel that there is even a bitterer grief than that it hath pleased Heaven to send to me. But to what has been I cannot—I dare not trust myself to make any allusion.

Sorrow has fallen heavily on us of late, and especially on poor Madge Murray—her auld's ornaul death she has thought

never complained, and disliked any allusion being made to the subject, and she thought, and we all did, that it was grief for the loss of one so dear that was affecting him.

Six weeks ago he was later than usual of making his appearance at breakfast. Madge went to the library for him, and found him seated at his writing-table, with a pen in his hand; he took no notice of her entrance, and when she went up to speak to him she discovered that he was *dead*! On the sheet of paper before him he had written the words "My dear Madge." They sent immediately for assistance, but all in vain—my unfortunate, ill-starred kinsman had ceased to exist. Richard went to the Hall the moment he heard of this awful event, and my Grandmother followed as soon as possible. They wanted Madge and Harry to come here, but that Madge would not agree to. She remained at the Hall to see everything attended to, for, as she said, no one could know what would have been her father's wishes so well as she did—and there she was right.

My poor kinsman had evidently expected that his end was near, for they found a will, dated immediately after his return from London, in which everything was left to Madge, as curatrix for Harry; and my brother and she were the sole executors. But there was not so much to leave as might have been expected, for at the '45 the estate had been heavily burdened, to enable him to raise the regiment of light horse which he put at the Prince's disposal; and since then he had lived up to his income.

When the funeral was over, my brother again begged

of Madge that she would come to the Mount; but she said it was impossible, there was so much that she only could do—and amongst other things, the arranging of all the Secretary's papers and letters; and that we know is a task of no common difficulty, and requiring so much care and circumspection. Accordingly we did not expect her, knowing how much there was to do, and how sad and painful the office before her. I was lying on a couch before the door—I am so weak now, that walking fatigues me, and so I lie and inhale the fresh air, which they think is to bring me health—I lay there, looking at the sky above me, and thinking on the past. My Grandmother was seated near me, and Richard was walking up and down, when suddenly Madge rode up. I thought how often she used to do that; of the strange scenes that so often seemed to follow in her track; of the change in one short year. Then I had ridden, nearly as boldly as she now did, to intercede for my kinsman's assistance in a case of danger—and now both were in their graves, and I lying there, fast following them.

I had seen Madge look wretched on her return from London, but now there was a wildness in her look which terrified me: I knew something terrible must have occurred to call up that look.

She had no groom—Harry even was not with her. She sprang off her horse ere my brother could reach her, and walking up to my Grandmother, she handed her a packet, and said:

“Look at this. For the love of Heaven tell me it is false, and to the latest hour of my life I will bless you.”

My Grandmother opened the packet. It had come at last—the bolt we ever feared had fallen, and crushed her. My Grandmother says she knew ere she opened the packet what it was; it was therefore no surprise to her to find when she did so the account of the trial of the unhappy Ashton, and that to save his life he had betrayed his cause. But though she knew perfectly what she would see, for some little time she gave no answer, but occupied herself as if examining the papers, whilst Madge in breathless expectation stood beside. Her silence gave Madge hope, for in a triumphant tone she exclaimed:

“I knew it was so—I knew it *must* be a lie, base and heartless as he who planned it. What! a Murray of Ashton turn traitor! I would I were a man for one hour that his blood might atone for traducing the dead.”

“Madge,” my Grandmother said at last, “where got ye these papers?—they ought never to have met your eye.”

“But they are false—they are utterly false. Tell me that?”

It was a terrible moment to us all; and then I felt how easy it was to bear the death of those we love, compared to their dishonour.

“Madge,” my Grandmother said, sadly, looking at her.

Madge’s heart beat so wildly, that standing near me as she did, I actually *heard* its pulsations.

“God help you, poor lassie.”

“Then it is true?” she said, in a hoarse whisper.

"Madge, it is true."

She sank down—not senseless as we had once seen her fall—but crushed and prostrate as if a heavy weight had fallen on her; and so indeed there had, and such as there was no escaping from.

"Madge, my dear lassie," my Grandmother said, bending over her, and taking her hand. But Madge was stunned by the violence of the blow, and could return no answer.

"Richard," my Grandmother said, for he stood holding Madge's horse, as if he knew what was coming, and dreaded seeing it.

He approached towards us, looking little less sad than Madge herself did.

"Oh, Richard, how can this have happened? How came the poor thing ever to learn this?"

He leant over her, and spoke to her, and, as if his voice had the power to rouse her when others failed, she looked up—but stupified, as one but half awake.

"Madge, who has done this? How came you to see these papers?"

"They were sent to me."

"Sent to you! Good Heavens, who could be so cruel?"

"It was Ker. I knew he had papers and letters of papa's, for he used to be in his confidence (oh, how cruelly he has abused it!), and used to be so often at the Hall, so I sent and told him to return all the papers he had, and to-day I got a letter, and a packet from him. In the letter he told me that he returned those I had sent for, and some others, of the existence of

which I was probably not aware, but which it would be better for me no longer to be ignorant of. I opened the packet, and oh, would that I had died ere I did so! But Grannie, dear Grannie! Richard! it cannot be true. Say that it is not, and I'll devote my life to you." And poor Madge clasped Richard's hand in both of hers, and looked at him with such imploring eyes, that it was a sore temptation for him to withstand, loving her as he does. He said nothing, but sorrowfully shook his head. Madge felt that all hope was gone, that this secret was true, and that disgrace clung to the name of the proud Murrays of Ashton. "Oh, this is dreadful! Can you give me no ray of hope or comfort to cling to? Are we, indeed, a disgraced as well as a ruined family? I told you, when once you thought we might have to leave Ashton, that I had sooner part with my right hand; and now I'll be thankful to go, and hide our disgrace in another land. That I should have lived to be ashamed of the name I bear!"

Madge started up, and walked up and down impatiently. My Grandmother went to fetch a letter which the Secretary had written to her at the time of his wife's death, and which proved how deeply his erring heart felt that first, that single false step in an otherwise unblemished and brilliant career.

"Madge," she said, as she gave it to her, "ye maunna blame them that's gane. This will show you, if there was a *fault*, how deeply it was repented and atoned."

"Blame *him*! Grannie? No, that I never would, whatever had been done. Had I but known this sooner,

what would I not have done for him. Oh, who can know, as I do, the years of agony he has lived through? Had he only been spared me, Grannie, I should not have suffered so deeply—all was *not* lost whilst he remained."

She continued walking up and down the court-yard. My brother joined her, and ever and anon as they passed my couch, I heard what they were saying. Indeed, they both appeared too deeply engrossed to heed our presence. He evidently had been again urging his suit, for she said:

"No, Richard, dear cousin, that can never, never be now. Your wife must be one who will not blush to own her name, and of whose family you may well be proud. I am not that one—and so it can never, never be now."

"But Madge, dearest, this is no new secret to me; I have known it all along, and yet have ever loved you, and wished to shield you from any distress which it might occasion. It has made no difference in me heretofore, why should it do so now?"

"There speaks your own noble heart; but I, dear cousin, shall not expose you to the cruel pity of the world for having wed the daughter of Murray of Ashton;" and they passed on. As they returned, Richard was saying, "Ah, Madge, has the devotion of my life no claim: are you determined to refuse me?"

"I am determined not to sacrifice your future happiness."

"But I have ever known this, and it never for one instant weighed with me, where you, dear Madge, were

concerned. It is an old tale now, Madge, forgotten by all, and best that it should be so. Why revive it by leaving us? Stay with us, dearest Madge; give me but the right to defend the character of the father of my *wife*, and he is a bold man who will say aught that his daughter may not be proud to hear."

"Oh, Richard! would I could; but I will not take advantage of your generous nature."

"Let me decide for you, Madge. Trust yourself to me, and I'll guard your father's honour as jealously as my own."

Madge returned no answer to this. They walked towards that part of the court where Richard had fastened her horse, which stood waiting patiently all this time.

"What do you say, Madge? Will you give me no answer?"

"I cannot just now, Richard: give me time to think what it is best for me to do."

"To-morrow then, Madge. To-morrow I shall come for my answer."

"No, not to-morrow—the day after, and then——" She was now mounted. "And till then, and ever, my own dear cousin, may Heaven reward you for all your kindness to me." She took Richard's hand in hers, and stooping over her horse's neck raised it to her lips; then, waiting for no reply, she gave her horse a touch with her whip and rode off at full speed, and never once turned her head to look back.

"Poor Madge! this blow has struck home," Richard said; and he walked away, and that day I saw him no more.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SEPTEMBER 18, 1754.—My brother came to me soon after breakfast, and we talked much, over the events of yesterday. He appeared to be very low and dejected, and I am an ill hand now at comforting any or bidding them hope. Alas! all my hopes were quenched when they were the brightest, and the word seems a bitter mockery from my lips—still I did my best. He repeated over and over again his undying love for Madge, and that his life will be utterly valueless to him without her; and then he would suddenly stop, as if fearful of renewing my grief by this allusion to his own. Ah, dear brother! sorrow such as mine never sleeps; such a wound as I have received can cease to bleed only in the grave, to which they seem to fear I am fast hastening. “I know,” he said, “that Madge, dearly as you both like her, is not such as you would have chosen for me; but her wild daring spirit, which terrifies you, possesses for me a fascination which words cannot describe. And then when it passes away, as with me it so often does, and she is gentle and feminine as you, little Martha, oh! you can never know

the deep hold of the heart such a nature as hers takes, nor how impossible it is ever to forget her. Madge, Madge! if you knew the long, long years I have passed in trying to gain your affection, you would not give me up so readily."

"Indeed, dear brother, you do us injustice if you fancy we do not appreciate Madge. The only reason we could have, in wishing that you had chosen otherwise, is no lack of affection for Madge, only that we know none worthy of you. Madge is dear to me beyond expression, and I shall with delight hail her as my sister."

"Poor Madge—but for that unfortunate leap of Harry's, what a different creature she would have been. And yet, Heaven knows, she could not have been dearer to me," said Richard, earnestly.

"Do ye no see, Sir Richard," said my Grandmother, who was seated at her wheel, and had hitherto heard us in silence—"do ye no see, Sir Richard, how true it is, what I have ever said o' your love for that lassie. Your reason tells you that Madge is owre bauld and independent, and your love canna altogether blind you to that. Dearly as I loe Madge, I am no blind to her fauts; and yet I say there is the making o' a good wife in her. She has a leal, true, and kindly heart, and ane that will risk a' ere she betrays a friend. She is mair independent than a woman ought to be, and meaning-nae harm, she is often owre near it, ere she is aware o' the danger. And yet at her heart, and unknown to herself, she dreads the world as much as ony ane; did

she no do that, she wadna, for fear o' its ill tongue, gie up ane that she loes better than her life."

"Alas, I fear I am not that one, for though Madge has long been aware of my affection for her, she never said she returned it."

"Na, I trow not! Madge is no the ane to do that. But look in your mirror, Sir Richard, and tell me, is a young lassie like to be blind to looks like yours? Ask your ain kind heart, that stood true to Madge, when I, that should hae known the bairn, feared there was something amiss—ask it, if a heart like Madge's is no like to be drawn to ane like yours. Auld women like me, Richard, see more than you gie us credit o'. Though mony years and mony sorrows hae passed owre me, and the cauld hand o' time chilled the youth o' my heart, I can remember that ance I was young, and, believe me, Richard, be it a comfort to you, or be it otherwise—believe me, when I tell you that Madge Murray loes you wi all the fervour her passionate heart is capable of, and though she never owned it, I am sair mistaen if ye lo'ed her lang in vain. Such a heart as hers is gi'en at ance, or never. Oh, Richard, ye are mair bashfu, or mair blind than most o' your sex and name, if ye didna see that it was breaking her heart to part wi you; and weel as I lo'ed Madge afore, I liked her better than ever yesterday, when rather than ye should hae a wife wha's father ye would blush to own she liked you weel enough to gie you up, lest in after years ye might regret what ye had done."

At this moment the door burst open, and Harry

Murray rushed in, his handsome features betokening more grief than it could have been supposed possible for them to express.

"Where is cousin Dick—oh, where is cousin Dick?" he exclaimed, not seeing my brother, who rushed to meet him.

"Here, Harry. What in Heaven's name is the matter?"

"Oh cousin—dear cousin Dick!" Harry flung himself on my brother's neck, crying bitterly. Richard became very pale. He feared, he knew not what, but he seemed unable to say more than one word—and it was "Madge!"

My Grandmother rose, and attempted to unclasp Harry's arms, which tightly enfolded Richard; but Harry resisted all her attempts, and only clung the closer, repeating, "Oh cousin Dick! dear cousin Dick!"

At last Richard recovered enough to say in his usual tone, "Well, Harry, what's the matter? What is wrong, man?"

"Oh, nothing! now that you are safe; but I was terribly frightened." But he never unclasped his arms.

"But you are safe now, Harry. No evil shall befall you here," said my brother, tenderly.

"Oh, no fear of me! I have no fear now that I have seen you again; but where were you going to?"

"Nowhere: sit down, man, and tell me all about it. Where is Madge?" And my brother, seeing that Harry would not leave him, sat down, whilst the poor boy hung over him, as if afraid, if he quitted him, he might lose

him. "Sit down, man, and tell me about your fright, and where is Madge?"

"Oh, Madge is at the Hall; but I was so frightened that I should not see you again, that I took Prince Rupert and galloped all the way across. I never drew in till I was at the door. I dare say I have not been much more than twenty minutes by the way; but it's all right now—now that you are safe; and Madge will be so glad."

"But what made you fancy otherwise?"

"Eh! what?" said Harry, not comprehending the question.

"What made you fancy I was not safe?"

"I don't know. Madge said I would never see you again," was poor Harry's reply.

"Madge said so!" said my brother, hastily. "Dear Harry, try and tell me about it. When did Madge say so? Try and tell me—there's a dear fellow."

"Well, I'll tell you, as well as I can. When Madge went away from the Hall yesterday without me, I was afraid she was angry with me, and I didn't know what to do, so I went and sat outside till she came back, and she was crying, so I knew something was wrong, for she never cried so bad, except when papa died; so I asked her what was wrong, and said I would do anything for her; so she asked me if I would like to leave Ashton, and I said no, for I liked it better than Paris or anywhere, but I would go if she liked; so she said she was going far away, and of course I said I would go with her. So when we were in the house, she told

me not to say anything to little Flo, or anybody, about our going away, but to look out all the things that I would like to take with me, and bring them to her. And so I did, and she was up all the night packing them, and she several times came to my room when she thought I was sleeping, but I was not, only pretending, and she kissed me and cried, and said it was well poor mamma was in her grave; and were it not for me, she wished she was beside her. Well, this morning I was helping her, and we were in our den, and little Flo was playing, and I said, 'Who will take care of little Flo and the birds?' so she said, 'Grannie and Martha maybe would;' and I said 'I would ask cousin Dick to take care of the dogs till I saw him again;' and she said, 'Cousin Dick! dear cousin Dick! you will never see him again;' and she began to cry; and I remember when papa died, she said I would never see him again, and I was afraid that cousin Dick was dead; but now that I see you, it's all right, and you will be kind to the dogs—won't you, cousin?"

"And what did Madge say then?"

"But I don't know; for when she said I would never see you again, I ran out of the room, and ran to the stables, and saddled Prince Rupert, and rode over to ask where you were. Oh, Madge will be so glad to hear that you are safe, for she cried so when she said I would never see you again. But who could have told her so?"

"My dear Harry, what do I not owe to you for coming across?"

"Nothing at all. I am so glad to see you. I'll ride

across, and tell Madge that you are safe. You had best come too."

"The laddie says truly. Go wi him, Richard; if ye dinna get Madge's promise this day to be yours for ever, my word for it ye never see her again. I ken her proud spirit. It was for this she tauld ye to gie her a day to think it over, meaning ere this sun set to be beyond the reach o' temptation, and fearing that she could na say no again, when her heart pled sae strongly in your favour. Go wi Harry, Richard, and I say truly, God speed you in your wooing. Tell Madge to come to me as your affianced wife; and your mother, Richard, was na more welcome to me than she will be. But it's like an auld woman to fancy a young man needs any counsel how to woo a young maiden, and that a true heart does na teach a winning tongue. Heaven speed you, and send you back to me happy as you deserve to be."

Richard was leaving the room, when I walked up to him, and said:

"Tell them to saddle my horse also; I will accompany you, dear brother."

"You! dear Martha. You are unable, I fear, for such an exertion."

"I am quite able, Richard. I don't mean that if Madge won't listen to you, she will hear me; and yet I scarce think that to-day she will refuse me aught." For I could not but remember that this day last year I had ridden over to the Hall with Harry; and now!—oh, sad and terrible was the change since then!

During the ride we scarce spoke: each was too much

occupied with their own thoughts. Sometimes I thought that the grief I was suffering at retracing the same road under such different circumstances would quite overpower me, and that I could not go on; but when I looked at my brother, and thought that surely Madge could not have the heart to refuse me, I bore up against it. At last we reached the Hall. Not knowing where Madge was, we followed Harry. After trying the den in vain, he led the way up to his father's room, and there, standing before the picture of her mother, we found Madge. When last I was in that room *he* stood by my side. Harry rushed up to Madge, exclaiming:

"See, Madge, have I not done well? I have brought cousin Dick back with me."

"Oh, Harry, what have you done?" said Madge.

"The best and kindest thing for me that he could have done! Oh, Madge, is it like you to steal away from us thus? If my love were displeasing to you, I would never have resumed the subject. I do not wish for my sake that you should leave Ashton."

"What could I do, Richard?—I thought it was for the best," she replied, sadly.

"Madge," I said, "don't leave us; stay and fill my place. This day last year, Madge, by your counsel, I came to ask a favour of your father, which he at once granted. Will you be more obdurate when I plead in Richard's favour? Think, Madge, of all that since then I have suffered; let me hope that when I leave my dear brother you will be all, and more than all, that I

have been to him. Madge, dearest Madge, surely you will not let me ask in vain."

Madge said nothing, but grasped the chair against which she leant; Richard took her hand in his, raised it to his lips, and said:

"Then, fare you well, Madge; I was mistaken when I thought you cared for me. You never did, or we would not now part." He was leaving the room, when she sorrowfully said:

"Richard!" In an instant he was by her side again. "Richard, dearest cousin, *we* must not part thus in anger. Can you suppose I could be insensible to such devotion as yours? Dearest cousin, you think I do not love you. Now, when we are parting for ever, Richard, I will own to you that I have long done so, and that it costs me no less than it does you, that now we must part—only I love you too well, dear Richard, to sacrifice you to my wishes."

At that moment, Harry, who had been listening attentively, took Madge's hand, and looking sorrowfully in her face, he said: "But Madge, why should cousin Dick leave you?—think how sad we both were when we thought we should not see him again. I am different from other lads, Madge, and that is a sad thing for you, as well as for me, and you need some one better able than I am to fill papa's place. Dear Madge, let cousin Dick remain with us. I know he would be kind to us, and I will do everything for him the same as for you, and he could always be with me. You once said you would do anything that I

asked you. Do it now, Madge; don't make cousin Dick unhappy; don't send him away, but let him remain with us always, and be your friend, and my brother."

Richard took Madge's hand. It was *not* withdrawn. She gave him one of her sweet bright smiles, and said, "You must not prize it the less, dear cousin, that I give it to you at Harry's intercession. It was for his sake that I have so long withheld it."

I took Harry's hand, and led him out of the room. Heaven only knows how sincerely I rejoiced in their happiness; but I would not damp the joy of those two fond hearts, now, for the first time, truly understanding each other, by the sight of the tears which that happiness brought to my eyes.

THE END.

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